

The Spirit to Conserve *Wayang Kulit* through E-Commerce

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Abstract Electronic Commerce has been growing for over a decade. In addition to the support of technological advances, the community's need for effective and efficient trade transactions is also contributing to the great number of emerging online stores. One of them is www.tatahsunggingkulit.com online shop that sells *tatah sungging* (leather carving) products especially *wayang kulit* (leather puppets). Through www.tatahsunggingkulit.com, the villagers of Sidowarno Klaten are trying to market their products to a more global level. This study aims to identify the adoption level of *tatah sungging* artisans in practicing e-commerce, as well as to explore the obstacles faced by the artisans in conserving *wayang kulit* through online stores. This research uses qualitative approach with interactive analysis model. The data used in this study are primary data obtained through interviews and direct observation.

Keywords e-commerce, sungging wayang kulit, online shop

1. Introduction

Tatah sungging is an Indonesian art work that is famous for its uniqueness and beauty. Ristanti (2014) explains that *tatah sungging* is a technique of leather carving with complex patterns that is done continuously to produce a neat and beautiful inlay which is then continued by the technique of *menyungging* which is a coloring technique on the patterns so that they become “complete” and enhance their beauty and uniqueness. *Tatah sungging* is closely related to the art of *wayang kulit* (leather puppet) because *tatah sungging* is the main ornament attached to *wayang kulit* which has also gained the world's recognition as an indigenous culture of Indonesia. But nowadays, the art of *wayang kulit* is beginning to fade from its existence. This happens because the *wayang* artisans are incapable of facing the global market competition and dealing with the large incoming wave of popular culture.

Besides being well known as the centre of Javanese culture development, Solo and its surrounding satellite areas are also famous for its *tatah sungging kulit* industry. However, only few regions in Surakarta, Boyolali, Sukoharjo, Karanganyar, Wonogiri, Sragen, and Klaten still maintain the industry, and the number is expected to decline gradually. This fact has become a very strong concern for some particular communities who strongly support the preservation of this beautiful and unique culture (Ardianto & Widiyanti, 2015: 188).

To encourage the conservation of *tatah sungging* industry in Indonesia, Universitas Sebelas Maret as a college tries to

promote this art through a digital marketing communication media (e-commerce) which has been currently and widely used by the people in the world through an online marketing media of www.tatahsunggingkulit.com. This e-commerce media does not only serve as a media for product marketing, but also as a form of spirit as well as a medium for artisans and art lovers to preserve the art of *wayang kulit*. The preservation in this case refers to the activities carried out continuously so that the art of *wayang kulit* continues to exist in the community. A.W. Widjaja defines conservation as perpetuated, focused and integrated activities in order to achieve certain goals that reflect the existence of something permanent and eternal, dynamic, flexible, and selective (Jacobus, 2006: 115)

www.tatahsunggingkulit.com has been running for one year since it was launched in 2016, therefore it is necessary to evaluate the extent of the adoption rate of *tatah sungging* artisans towards this media and the extent to which this media can be the medium for the preservation of *wayang kulit* art.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1. Innovation Adoption Theory

Rogers (2001) states that adoption is a mental process in making the decisions whether to accept or reject new ideas and further affirms the acceptance and rejection of the new idea. Adoption can also be defined as a person's mental process from hearing, knowing, and until finally adopting an innovation. Adoption begins with the expression of ideas

from one party, transmitted to the second party, until the idea is accepted by the community as the second party. The decision to use new ideas as the best way of acting is the nature of adoption. When it comes to a product, adoption is defined as a mental process or behavioural change, in the forms of a person's knowledge, attitudes, and skills from the moment he or she come into contact with the innovation (renewal) of goods or services (Rogers and Shoemaker, 2002).

Innovation is a term that has been used extensively in various fields. In simple terms, Kotler (2003) defines innovation as goods, services, or ideas that are considered new by someone. Innovation is also defined as new ideas, behaviours, products, information, and practices that have not been widely known, accepted and applied / implemented by the majority of citizens in certain locality. Innovation can be used to encourage changes in all aspects of community's life for the sake of realizing the improvement of the quality of life of each individual and all related citizen (Mardikanto, 1993).

From the various definitions above, it can be explained that in an innovation, there are three elements; the first is idea, the second is the method or practice, and the third is the product (goods or services). To be regarded as an innovation, the three elements must contain the "new" characteristics. The new characteristic is not necessarily from the latest research results. But the term new here is judged from the assessment point of view of the individuals who use it i.e. the community as the adopter.

The innovation adoption is what motivates the Sidowarno village community to collaborate with Universitas Sebelas Maret in developing www.tatahsunggingkulit.com as an e-commerce portal to market and conserve *tatah sungging* handicraft products, especially *wayang kulit* that has become their livelihoods from generation to generation.

2.2. E-commerce

Electronic Commerce or e-Commerce is the sale or purchase of goods or services between companies, households, individuals, government, and other public or private organizations, which is conducted via internet-connected computers (Ahmadi, Hermawan, 2013: 7). Understanding e-commerce can be seen from three aspects, namely trade (commerce), business functions, and cooperation (collaboration). Based on these three aspects, e-commerce can also be defined as a telecommunication network application to conduct business transactions, exchange information, and maintain customer relationships before, during, and after the purchasing process (Zwass, 1998).

E-Commerce is part of the new media that focuses on economic and trade, therefore the nature and characteristics of the new media are also attached to e-commerce, among which: 1) Digital; new media that are based on digital technology can only operate through computer media and mobile phone technology such as Smartphone, 2) Interactivity; meaning that it can cut the time, can directly be controlled, and can enable two ways communication, 3) Hyper textual; the existence of a text system that can allow us to access other texts, 4) Dispersal; meaning that it

spreads, in which production, distribution and consumption are not centralized. Therefore every internet user (*netizen*) can be a manufacturer, distributor or just a consumer at a time, 5) Virtuality; this is our perception on the immaterial objects. Because new media also has the sense of presence even though not physically, we often call it the virtual world. This characteristic also encourages the formation of a new culture; the virtual culture (Kember and Zylinska, 2013).

According to Ahmadi and Hermawan (2013), in the implementation of e-commerce system, there are several types of transactions, among others: Collaborative Commerce (C-Commerce), Business to Business (B2B), Business to Consumers (B2C), Customer-to-Business (C2B), and Customer to Customer (C2C). www.tatahsunggingkulit.com uses the type of Business to Consumers (B2C) transaction, i.e. the seller is an organization and the buyer is an individual. B2C has the characteristics of: open to public, service is generic, service is provided on demand.

3. Research Method

The study on the conservation of *wayang kulit* art through www.tatahsunggingkulit.com was conducted in a descriptive qualitative research that focuses on one object namely www.tatahsunggingkulit.com. The data and information used in this research were collected from several sources, namely informants (artisans, consumers / site visitors and community leaders), and the activities in www.tatahsunggingkulit.com website. The data were collected through in-depth interviewing and direct observation techniques. The collected data and information were analysed through interactive analysis as follows:

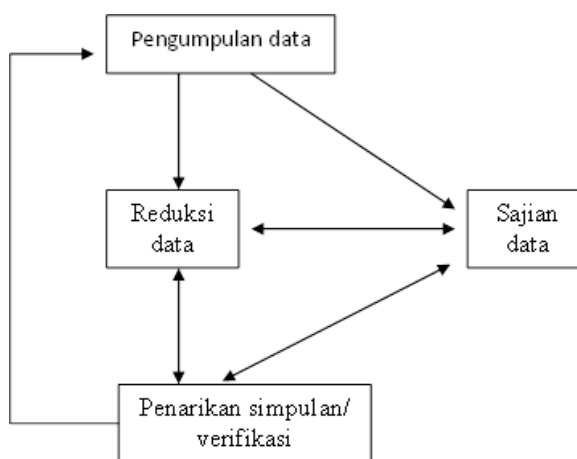


Figure 1. Interactive Analysis Model (Miles &Huberman, 1992:20)

4. Research Results

3.1. Getting to Know www.tatahsungging.com

www.tatahsunggingkulit.com is an e-commerce that was created as a pilot project that aims to develop the creative

industry of *tatah sungging* in Solo Raya. This system is built based on community, which in this case, a group of *tatah sungging* artisans in Sidowarno village of Wonosari District of Klaten Regency was selected. In order to facilitate the joint marketing practice, an institution of joint marketing community was formed; namely *Wisanggeni* community. The vision of *Wisanggeni* community is to become a venue for the competitive artisans of *tatah sungging* in Sidowarno Village, and its mission is to empower the *tatah sungging* artisans in Sidowarno Village through joint marketing activities throughout the whole country and the world.

In the joint marketing through www.tatahsunggingkulit.com, the function of *wisanggeni* community is to maintain the productivity of the artisan community. E-commerce portal system and management are run by the village government under the management of the village head. This *Tatah Sungging* E-commerce adopts the electronic market system or EMS. This system is an application that utilizes information and communication technology to conduct bidding activities in a particular market so that buyers can easily compare the prices with other prices.

Through e-commerce, the advantage gained by the buyer is that the transaction feels more real and time-efficient. As for the sellers, information about the products sold can be provided more easily and quickly, thus attracting many customers.

Since it was first launched on October 1st, 2016 E-commerce www.tatahsungging.com has so far been visited by 7569 visitors. However, during its development, the e-commerce is faced with many and varied obstacles, among others:

- The absence of artisans cooperative in Sidowarno village so that researchers are quite constrained in coordinating with each *tatah sungging* artisan.
- Although FGD has been repeatedly conducted in the context of socialization of e-commerce media, the artisans still do not have confidence in this media. So researchers need a long time in collecting data, both photos, product descriptions, and product prices.
- Emerging disbelief in the form of fear that their product will be imitated, security of transactions, and the desire to directly negotiate with customers, so there is reluctance to include product prices.
- The existence of internet network constraints for all operators in Sidowarno village.
- There is difficulty in finding an admin team that will fully manage the e-commerce.

3.2. Adoption Level

Adoption is a process of implementing an innovation, in this case is e-commerce of www.tatahsunggingkulit.com. E-commerce is an innovation because it is a new thing for the

community of *tatah sungging* artisans especially in the area of research in Sidowarno village. Before the e-commerce was present in the society of *artisans* in Sidowarno, they market their products only through word of mouth so that this craft is less known by the public and seen as exclusive. www.tatahsunggingkulit.com exists as a new marketing technology for the artisan community in Sidowarno. In order for the artisan community to adopt and participate in a joint marketing system, a long process is required. Rogers (2001) explains that in order to adopt an innovation, five stages of the decision making processes are required: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption

The results of research show that from 32 artisans, only 4 (four) artisans adopt or use this e-commerce to date. Here are the results of the study on the artisans' distribution based on the level of adoption.

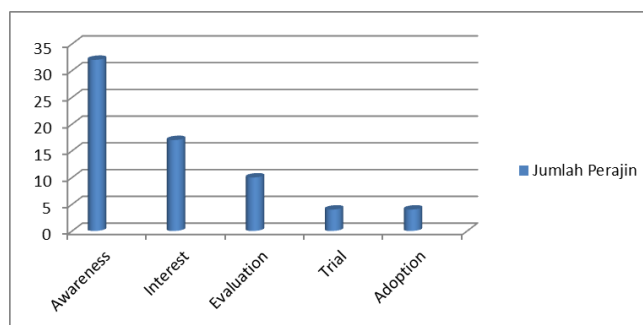


Figure 2. Distribution of www.tatahsungging.com Adoption Level in *Wisanggeni* Community of Sidowarno Village.

After 1 year of launching the e-commerce, only 10 artisans made it through the evaluation phase, and even only 4 artisans who managed to reach the adoption stage. The awareness stage is a stage where the artisans become aware of the e-commerce but lacks information about it. Awareness stage emerged when the socialization on the importance of e-commerce for the joint marketing of their *tatah sungging* works. The socialization was conducted simultaneously to all artisans in the Sidowarno village. The socialization results in an understanding for all craftsmen. But at this stage, the artisans have not got much information related to e-commerce.

In the next stage, the interest stage, the artisans began to be stimulated to seek information about the innovation. Not all craftsmen showed interest in this system. Only 53% of the artisans showed their interest in this system. The interest in this system can be seen from their activeness to explore information related to this system. Some of the information pursued by the artisans among others are related to the management system, sales system, how to transact and negotiate with potential customers, cyber crimes and the most widely pursued is the extent to which the possibility of piracy and protection of their copyrighted works.

The evaluation stage is a stage of considering whether or not to try the innovation. At this stage, not many artisans would consider trying this system. Only 31% of the artisans reached this stage. Some artisans did not continue to this stage mostly due to their lack of access to this technology (the need for internet access), lack of experience using

digital technology and their reluctance to leave the comfort zone of conventional transactions.

Of the 10 (31%) artisans, only 4 artisans are up to the stage of trial and adoption. The four artisans are Ki Sumanto, Ki Baron, Ki Kawi, and Ki Hendiyoko. Some of their reasons to use this system are not just for the benefit of running business or selling their artworks, but their strongest reason is that they want to show the works of *tatah sungging kulit* at the national and even international level. Through this e-commerce portal they are aware of the global scope of this system that is able to reach all areas and layers of society. Within a period of 1 year www.tatahsunggingkulit.com has been visited by 7596 visitors with an average of 15 visitors each day.

3.3. *Wayang Kulit* Art Conservation through www.tatahsunggingkulit.com

The presence of e-commerce amid the *tatah sungging* artisans in Sidowarno village does not only function as an internet-based marketing medium but also as the generator of multiplier effect, among which is the preservation of *wayang kulit* art. Wati (2014) explains that one of the goals of cultural preservation is also to perform cultural revitalization (reinforcement). Regarding the cultural revitalization, Prof. A. Chaedar Alwasilah (2006) said that there are three steps, namely: (1) understanding to generate awareness, (2) collective planning, and (2) generation of cultural creativity.

The presentation of www.tatahsunggingkulit.com amid the global community indirectly shows the existence of this art and raises public awareness. The properties of this media also allow the interactive dialogue among the elements of society and ultimately build a collective awareness regarding this art. It can be seen from some of the community's testimony to this system as follows:

"The works with high artistic value, good luck....succeed.....!!!!!" (Dido)

"A worthy cultural heritage....may it last along with the ever-developing world.." (Axell)

"Thank you tatahsunggingkulit.com ...your works are great..."(Ki Martoyo)

"I hope this website brings benefits for the wayang kulit artisans. Always succeed" (Sartika)

"I feel helped with the presence of tatah sunggingkulit.com website. I hope, with this website, the works from our village can be widely known by the people"(Narso)

"We wish success for tatahsunggingkulit.com website"(Sumarno)

(www.tatahsunggingkulit.com, accessed on July 26th 2017)

The testimonies above prove that the e-commerce can grab the attention of people from various backgrounds and age.

5. CONCLUSION

The creativity in the conservation of *tatah sungging kulit* products, especially *wayang kulit* through the e-commerce portal of www.tatahsunggingkulit.com, has received a positive appreciation from the community. Thus it can be concluded that in the effort to conserve *wayang kulit* art, www.tatahsunggingkulit.com gives a positive impact in terms of its role in: 1) presenting the existence of this art, 2) identifying the number and individuals who have concern to this art and 3) becoming a medium of communication to channel the aspirations of the community regarding this art. As a marketing medium, e-commerce portal www.tatahsunggingkulit.com has also been able to provide an increase of income for the artisans aside from the traditional sales.

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