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Public Engagement and The Making of Carnaval’s Place at Jember Fashion Carnaval

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Abstract

A creative idea will not thrive without hard work of those who support it. The big dream of Dynand Fariz, who initiated Jember Fashion Carnaval, is to make an alternative brand for Jember as the Tobacco City. As a matter of facts, the tobacco production in Jember has been declining due to the massive campaigns of anti-tobacco. Jember is now well known as a 'City of World Carnival'. The streets in the city are utilized as catwalks for fashion carnival. In the carnival, creative costumes with local-global characteristic are displayed in a massive scale. The event becomes a public art exhibition. The regular events have encouraged everyone to promote and carry out the mission of the city. The involvement of all levels of society in creative activities has ultimately founded solid corporate culture that becomes the new identity of Jember community.

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Keywords: creative idea; fashion carnival; public engagement

1. Introduction

1.1. Jember as a Tobacco City

The Jember region in eastern Java was the largest tobacco producer in Indonesia. The city of Jember has been known as a Tobacco City since the Dutch colonial period. The majority of people in and around the city make their

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living as plantation workers or farmers. The development of the city can not be separated from the plantation companies established by the Dutch. The rapid growth of plantation companies required more workers, and people from other regions, such as Blitar, Madura, Bugis, Blambangan dan Banyuwangi, are recruited to work in the plantation. The incoming workers settled around Jember and got themselves in interracial marriages with people from Holland, China, and Arab. This socio-cultural background of Jember people has influenced the current culture and people's mindset. People of Jember are open minded, tolerant, adaptable, and willing to accept external cultural influences.

1.2. Individual creative idea and public engagement

Creative ideas among people of Jember start from regular meetings among family members during holidays. Family members agree to wear unique clothes and come to the meeting venue on foot. There are always new ideas every year, leading to what then became the dream of Dynand Fariz, to transform this family tradition into a street carnival that involves the public. In 2000, Fariz founded Konsultan Mode Dynand Fariz, which took the form of a showroom and a workshop. Fariz made sure that all of his employees create clothing items by following the world fashion trends and take a walk on the village streets. From this activity, Fariz started to realize his dream by recruiting young people of Jember and managed to assemble around 150 participants. He set the theme for the carnival, provided in-house training sessions and took the participants and their costume creations to wander the streets of Jember with 'beca' music in the background. The event marked the moment of the first Jember Carnival in 2003. Simple people who were craving for entertainment came flocking to take position on street sides to watch the event. The event has brought a new and interesting attraction in the city: a fashion parade with unusual costumes that inevitably caused the traffic to stop moving.

Fariz found the carnival as a challenge and planned for future events by collaborating with the city government as JFC could not grow simply by obtaining official permits. Another challenge came from religious leaders who found the costumes weird as the event was presenting subthemes that included Punk, Cowboy, and Gipsy defiles. The religious leaders believed that the costume display might have undesirable effects on the spiritual values of Jember people, who have always been known to be religious. Jember has 31 counties where there is at least one *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in each county. Fariz was unfazed by all these challenges and went on to set up Jember Fashion Carnival Council (JFCC), which fights and moves forward to open the eyes of city government and religious leaders. The carnival Fariz wanted to realize had a mission to develop arts and culture education as well as to promote education of creativity for young people. JFC's vision to make Jember a city for fashion tourism in Indonesia and the world, as well as, a city of world carnival will bring benefits in social, culture, politics, economy, and tourism aspects.

Fariz organized a number of meetings to disseminate information on JFC's vision and mission by holding talks with city government officials, religious leaders, cultural experts, security officials, and groups who are not in favor of JFC. Understanding the goals of JFC and seeing the positive effects in promoting Jember, they finally gave the much-needed support and permits gradually. The officials has issued permits to use the city streets for annual JFC events. Permits are also given to utilize the back yard of the government office as a backstage during the final preparation and the execution of the event. Having seen that JFC has managed to attract hundreds of tourists from various regions, both domestic and overseas, the Tourism Board has decided to include JFRC events into the Visit Jember Month (Bulan Berkunjung Jember/ BBJ) agenda. The police also contribute by maintaining order and regulating the crowd coming to the main streets, guaranteeing the security of the creators and spectators during the preparation, execution, and the aftermath of the event.

Jember cultural expert Professor Ayu Sutarto provides support by explaining the positive values gained from JFC to certain parties, who are still against the event. This was necessary to eliminate the potentials of conflicts that may occur at any time. The JFC existence can now be evaluated from the positive responses of Jember people, as well as, those from outside Jember. Those who get the benefit from JFC are followers, art activists, academicians, local creative industries, culinary industries, street vendors, transportation, accommodation, and mass media. Participants who are willing to be trained in various skills for the purposes of fashion carnival are primary assets for the continuity of JFC. The JFC needs to enhance the magnitude of the events by increasing its participants every year, training of design skills, regeneration of trainers, and reliable management.

Like any formal organization, JFC has JFCC, which began as a non-formal family organization and gradually improved itself, and transformed into a formal organization. As an institution that should guarantee the continuous supply of participants and trainers for fashion carnival, Fariz has collaborated with Jakarta State University to establish Indonesia Carnival Institute in Jakarta and Jember. Fariz chaired the Carnival Association of Indonesia, who set standards and regulations for cities wanting to lift its image through carnival. One of the things that have triggered this association is the formation of Wonderful Archipelago Carnival by seven provinces in Indonesia. Those are DKI Jaya represented by Jakarta Food and Fashion Festival, Central Java represented by Solo Batik Carnival, East Java represented by Jember Fashion Carnaval, Bali represented by Kuta Carnival, East Kalimantan represented by Tenggarong Kutai Carnival, Riau Islands represented by Riau Islands Carnival and Bangka Belitung represented by Bangka Belitung Carnival.

1.3. The making of place at Jember Fashion Carnaval

To realize the vision of JFC as fashion tourism and Jember as the city of world carnival, Fariz has to mobilize people of Jember to become creators. He has to organize a large number of spectators in order to attract media coverage and to minimize cost. This was only possible by means of utilizing streets as the showcase area. Being educated in Esmod France and having observed carnivals in Brazil, have inspired him to combine the two into Global Costume and Fashion Carnival. This carnival must be different from fashion carnivals since it has the local flavour that Fariz claimed to be absent in other cities. The place for the carnival is to be city-scale spaces, which are close to everyday lives, yet, give significant meaning to the people of Jember. The event route is planned to start from the city center, going through major streets in the city: Jalan Sudarman, Sultan Agung, Gajah Mada, and finish at Sports Hall Kaliwates Square.

Indonesian people are mostly a society of spectacle, which means people like to watch and being watched, and cultural and social values can be learned and understood from the media spectacle (Debord, 1995: 94-140). The people of Jember, long before JFC, had a tradition that utilize the streets as a venue to hold art performances. These shows were an integral part of the people's religious ceremonies, known as Helaran (Denissa, 2012). The streets were a sacred place to hold ruwatan (spiritual cleansing) or selamatan (thanksgiving) dedicated to Sang Hyang Seri for all kinds of happiness blessed to the people, including soil fertility, successful harvest, birth, circumcision, marriage, health, and others.

The streets are the place with charisma to express gratitude and devotion by performing rituals and artistic activities. The crowd gathers to witness these religious rituals while enjoying art performances that accompany them as a representation of prayers and blessings. With time, *ruwatan* has transformed into new types of activities such as Parade of Development and *pesantren* tradition that perform defiles ahead of Idul Fitri holidays. Tayub tradition is a youth party on the streets that marks the beginning of sugar cane milling. It is a tradition since 1970 that involves an annually colossal march covering a distance of approximately 31 km known as *Tajemtra* (Tanjung Jember Tradisional). To make this march even more lively, the people like to wear unique costumes to appear as farmers, muddy buffaloes, corpses in linen, and many others. At the time Fariz came up with his idea to promote Jember through fashion carnival and to utilize streets as performance runways; it was nothing new to the people of Jember as they were already accustomed to it. The streets are familiar venue for the people to express their religious belief, culture, tradition, achievements, to meet people, to communicate and promote moral messages.

The JFC event starts at Jember city center while the front yard of the government office is transformed into the main stage or runway. Tents and seating areas for VIP guests are set up along the sides of the street for government officials, family members of models/ creators, invitees, and spectators, who wish to get the best seats with a view by purchasing tickets. At the end of the runway, a special stand is built to accommodate foreign and domestic professional photographers, so they get an ideal view to capturing the scenes by long shots, normal shots, or close-ups of the models coming down the stage.

With music in the background, the creators will walk gracefully from the stage towards the runway while performing their choreographies, moving into formations, dancing and posing, while the photographers are always ready to capture the moments. From the photographers area, the models parade through the main streets, approximately 3.6 km long, to finish at the final post at Sports Hall Square where Fariz waits patiently for the last

defile to arrive. Costume groupings are determined according to subthemes, and each defile is accompanied by a different music from the other. Each defile consists of 60-70 creators for each category/ subtheme. All kinds of recorded music are prepared for the defiles in cars that move behind the creators. There are ten cars carrying the music players for ten subthemes.

In JFC XII in 2014, the 4-day event was divided into four categories: Kid's Carnival, Art Ware's Carnival, Wonderful Archipelago Carnival and Grand Carnival. Besides Wonderful Archipelago Carnival, the other three category have the same theme: Tri Angle Dynamic in Harmony. The theme is associated to the dynamic harmony between God, me and others. The JFC XIII was divided into 10 subthemes and organized through 10 groups: Mahabharata, and Borobudur (representing local Indonesia cultural traditions), Apache (representing global cultural traditions), Tambora (representing global issues) and Phoenix, Stalagmite, Flying Kite, Wild Deer, Pine Forest and Chemistry (representing fashion trends). Global culture, archipelago culture, global issues, and fashion trends became the four underlying principles of JFC costume characteristics that have always been presented every year since 2005.

2. Methodology

This research uses descriptive qualitative method that explains how a personal idea can drive the creativity of young members of the community, which then develops into a spectacular show. The researcher conducted participant observation and in-depth interviews to Faris as the creator, models, spectators, committee, to study the belief behind all activities. The researcher made documentation as the primary data and literature studies related to social history, public engagement and corporate culture as secondary data. The spectators respond with such enthusiasm that they do not object to stand and wait for hours among the crowd. Millions of people have witnessed how JFC is very well presented and engaged various people. Many people are engaged, from JFCC, the sub-district government, culturists, security officers, tourism agency, mass media, carnival participants as creators, costume creations, photography artists, celebrities (Anang Hermansyah and Ashanty were invited to the close JFC XI event in 2012), and domestic, as well as, foreign spectators. Each of them takes a role and needs one another as people are related to one another. The success of a party affects the success of another. Victor SL.Tan in the Theory of Corporate Culture (Tan, 2002: 19,20) said, *“Corporate Culture is the way people do things in an organization. It is a set of norms comprising beliefs, attitudes, core values and behavioral patterns, shared by people in an organization. The belief is those assumptions or perceptions about things, people and the organization as a whole, taken as true or valid. The core values are the primary or dominant values, which are accepted throughout the organization.”*

Corporate Culture is the way the public behaves towards an organization. There are at least four important rules that JFCC has to heed in order to develop sustainably. The first rule forms a belief emphasizing that JFCC, the public, and JFC, are an entity that cannot be separated from the idea of reaching a common goal. Every member of the society, especially who are running the JFC, must maintain this belief. JFCC has to pass on the belief to all members of the society, to those serving as designers and those serving as spectators. Without public engagement, neither JFC nor JFCC would have earned any reward. The opposite is also true, the society without JFC would not have a platform for self-exploration and development. The belief has to go together with the second rule, appreciation for the roles of others during practice especially when performing. The third rule involves the core values of JFC, which is to develop the creativity of young people in Jember. JFCC needs to fight for this, and it should be the top priority of achievement of JFCC and the society.

Youth creativity is a potential that is often overlooked and its credibility untested, particularly for the purpose of improving social welfare, the economy, politics, and urban culture. The final rule is related to behavioural patterns, which concern the ways the society members' act towards one another. Behavioural patterns describe the relationships between the trainer and the trainee, which are committed to showing spirit, diligence, discipline, improving creativity, cooperation, willingness to learn from each other, and motivation to develop each other's strengths. Corporate Culture is very important in determining whether JFCC as an organization will survive the changes, turbulence, and challenges. A relationship model of the four rules can be seen in the diagram below:

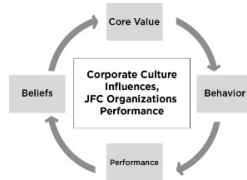


Fig 1. Corporate Culture Model. Source: KL Strategic Change Consulting.

3. Descriptive analysis

After observing its development from the beginning to its 12th year today, JFC has earned a number of achievements as in 2011, it is ranked as 4th among seven largest carnivals in the world, in the category of Carnival on the Spot. JFC also received an award as the world's longest carnival, spanning approximately 3.6 km, from Indonesian World Records Museum (MURI) in 2004 (Fariz, 2011:58), as well as various improvements as listed in the table below:


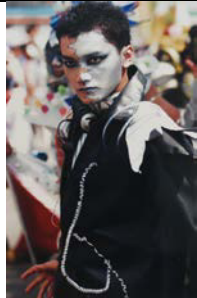


Table 1. Development of JFC variables in 5-year interval

Variable (Number)	Year 2003	Year 2008	Year 2013	Year 2014
Event Day	One day	One day	Four days	Five days
Carnaval Category	JFC	JFC Kid's Grand	JFC Exhibition: Culinary, Photography, Painting JFC Kid's JFC ArtWear JFC Grand	JFC Exhibition: Culinary, Photography, Painting JFC Kid's, JFC Art Wear JFC Archipelago, JFC Grand
Subtheme/ Defile	Three defiles	Eight defiles	Ten defiles	Ten defiles
Name of defile	Punk Cowboy Gipsy	Papua Achip. Royal Kingdom Earth Gate 11 Robotic Roots Metamorphic Under Sea Barricade Off	Betawi Venice Art Deco Canvas Spider Tibet Octopus Bamboo Beetle Tribe	Mahabharata Borobudur Apache Tabora Phoenix Stalagmite Flying Kite Wild Deer Pine Forest Chemistry
Visual Principles	-Fashion Trends (1 principle)	- Local Cultural Heritage - Global Cultural Heritage - Actual Global Issue - Fashion Trends 4 Principles of Jember Carnaval	-Local Cultural Heritage - Actual Global Issue - Fashion Trends 4 Principles of Jember Carnaval	- Local Cultural Heritage - Global Cultural Heritage - Actual Global Issue -Fashion Trends 4 Principles of Jember Carnaval
Creators	± 30 creators	±450 creators	±900 creators	±900 creators
Appreciators	Thousands domestic	Hundreds of thousands of domestic and foreign tourists	Millions of domestic and foreign tourists	Millions of domestic and foreign tourists
ID Appreciator at Runway Stage	Card 100 Apprec/day ± 2 tents	1800 Apprec/day, ± 40 tents	2300 Apprec/day, ± 55 tents	±4150 Apprec/day, ± 90 tents
Photographers	Some domestic	±500 domestic and	±2400 domestic and	±2600 domestic and

	amateur photographers	foreign photographers	professional times	foreign photographers	professional times	foreign photographers	professional times
Roadshow	-	±20 domestic and overseas	times	±50 domestic and overseas	times	±50 domestic and overseas	times

Source: Hamdha Arifta, JFC management-JFCC

Table 2. JFC costume visualizations in 2003

Defile Gipsy	Defile Punk	Defile Steam Punck	Defile Indian
			

Source: Documentation of Hamdha Arifta, JFC manajemen-JFCC

Table 3. JFC costume visualizations in 2008

Defile Robotic	Defile Robotic 2	Defile Under Sea	Defile Royal Kingdom
			
Defile Root 1	Defile Root 2	Defile Papua	Defile India
			

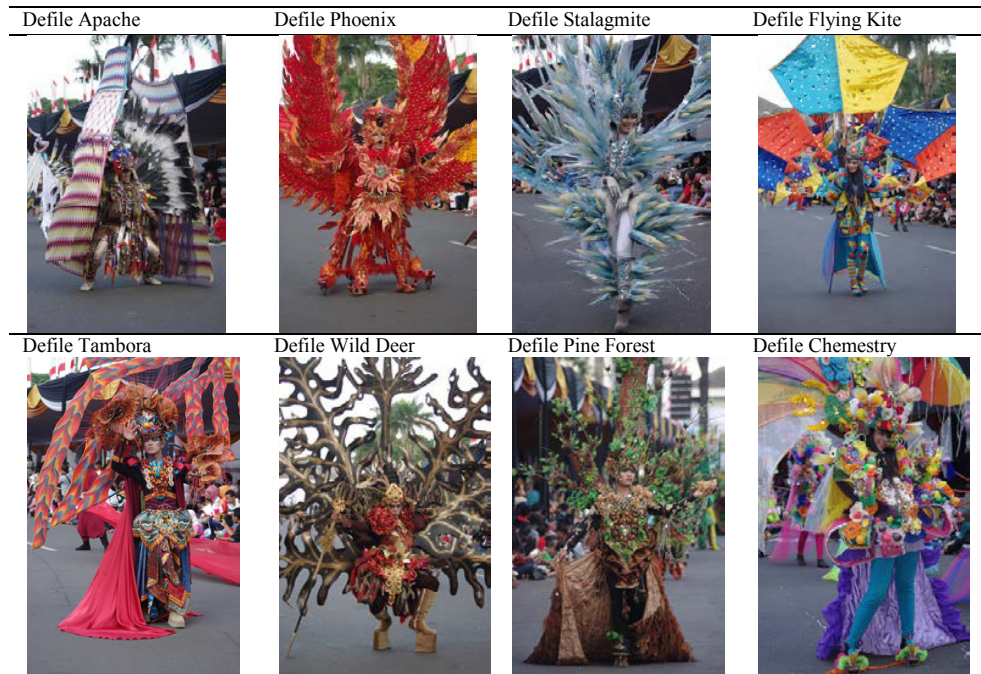
Source: Documentation of Hamdha Arifta, JFC manajemen-JFCC

Table 4. JFC costume visualizations in 2013

Defile Betawi	Defile Betawi	Defile Venice	Defile Octopus
			
Defile Octopus	Defile Art Deco	Defile Tribe	Defile Beetle
			
Defile Canvas	Defile Bamboo	Defile Spider	Defile Tibet
			

Table 5. JFC costume visualizations in 2014

Defile Mahabharata	Defile Mahabharata	Defile Borobudur	Defile Borobudur
			



The increase number of achievements can be seen from various variables such as the number of event days, carnival categories, parades, creators, spectators, photographers, roadshows to other cities or countries, and mass media that cover the events, which even included Reuter. Costume visualizations offered by JFC also attract more domestic and foreign tourists a year after year. This situation clearly indicates that the creativity of costume design has become the focus of attention in evaluating the development of JFC.

4. Conclusion

The astonishing progress may lead us to a notion that JFC, together with JFCC, has developed a well-balanced and the consistent synergy in the belief of the people of Jember. Public belief is not only the confidence of the creators who bring ideas on costume creations that are loaded with cultural messages, current issues and trends of fashion. Yet, it also generates confidence of other stakeholders, such as Subdistrict Government, Department of Tourism, Security Officers, Health Officers, Photography Art Lovers, Painters, Culinary, Academic, Culturalist, and Mass Media. The spectators' confidence at various social levels, as it is reflected in their enthusiasm, is equally important. The creativity of the young people in Jember has become the important value in implementing JFC vision and mission. The belief built upon creativity has been manifested appropriately through people's behaviour in supporting each other and establishing a synergic public engagement.

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