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Independence Day celebration in growing the spirit of nationalism in Sukahurip Village

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ABSTRACT

Commemoration of the Independence Day of the Republic of Indonesia is one of the programs held by UPI KKNT students in Sukahurip Village. This service documents and analyzes competition activities commemorating the 78th Indonesian Independence Day in Sukahurip Village. Activities involve competitions such as carnivals, dongdang, and gate decorating, aiming to foster a feeling of love for the country, remembering the nation's struggle's history, and appreciating Indonesian culture's noble values and diversity. The competition activity created a moment of togetherness and patriotism in Sukahurip Village. Through the creativity and innovation displayed in each competition, people are inspired to get involved in the development of their region. Social solidarity is strengthened primarily through active participation in the preparation and implementation of dongdang competitions. Suggestions for further programs could include integration of vertical and horizontal approaches, active community participation in planning, long-term impact evaluation, analysis of community welfare, comparative studies with similar villages, development of local development models, and further studies on the role of KKN students. Hopefully, this service program can contribute to understanding the impact of competition activities in Sukahurip Village.

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ABSTRAK

Peringatan hari Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia menjadi salah satu program yang diadakan oleh mahasiswa KKNT UPI di Desa Sukahurip. Pengabdian ini mendokumentasikan dan menganalisis kegiatan perlombaan yang diselenggarakan selama peringatan HUT RI ke-78 di Desa Sukahurip. Kegiatan melibatkan berbagai lomba seperti karnaval, dongdang, dan menghias gapura, dengan tujuan memupuk rasa cinta tanah air, mengenang sejarah perjuangan bangsa, dan menghargai nilai-nilai luhur dan keberagaman budaya Indonesia. Kegiatan perlombaan berhasil menciptakan momen kebersamaan dan semangat patriotisme di Desa Sukahurip. Melalui kreativitas dan inovasi yang ditampilkan dalam setiap lomba, masyarakat terinspirasi untuk terlibat dalam pembangunan daerah mereka. Solidaritas sosial diperkuat, terutama melalui partisipasi aktif dalam persiapan dan pelaksanaan lomba dongdang. Saran untuk program selanjutnya dapat mencakup integrasi pendekatan vertikal dan horizontal, partisipasi aktif masyarakat dalam perencanaan, evaluasi dampak jangka panjang, analisis kesejahteraan masyarakat, studi komparatif dengan desa serupa, pengembangan model pembangunan lokal, dan studi lanjutan tentang peran mahasiswa KKN. Program pengabdian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan kontribusi yang lebih mendalam terhadap pemahaman dampak kegiatan perlombaan di Desa Sukahurip.

Kata Kunci: Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia; KKNT UPI; nasionalisme; perayaan kemerdekaan

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country rich in natural resources and culture (Indraswati & Sutisna, 2020) that offers famous natural beauty worldwide. Indonesia also has cultural diversity from Sabang to Merauke (Fajri *et al.*, 2022). Indonesia is colorful but remains red and white at every corner (Syardiansah, 2019). This diversity has given rise to Indonesia's rich and unique culture, such as traditional houses, traditional ceremonies, traditional clothing, traditional dances, traditional musical instruments and songs, traditional weapons, and various traditional foods (Utami, 2018).

Indonesia's cultural diversity originates from local cultures that continue to grow and develop within communities (Sugeng *et al.*, 2023). The influence of various cultures is evident and impacts society, thereby creating culture itself (Oktiningrum & Zuhroh, 2023). Over time, cultural development has played a role in enhancing nationalistic spirit (Nursekti, 2022). This is because local culture carries social values that need to be applied by Indonesian society at large (Nurwahidin & Sudjarwo, 2022).

The 17th day of August 1945 is historic for the Indonesian nation. On that date, Indonesia declared its independence from colonial rulers. (Aisy *et al.*, 2021). Achieving independence was difficult for Indonesia, as the Indonesian people fought hard to gain their freedom (Nafisah & Dewi, 2021). Every year, Indonesians hold various activities to celebrate their independence (Candra *et al.*, 2020). These include formal activities such as the Republic of Indonesia's independence ceremony and informal activities such as various competitions (Andara *et al.*, 2021). The competitions held by the Indonesian people on Independence Day aim to grow a sense of love for the country, solidarity, and kinship, as well as encourage the younger generation of Indonesians to continue to love and be proud of their country (Agus & Zulfahmi, 2021).

This moment of independence is used to revive the spirit of the younger generation through various planned competitions (Fauziah & Dewi, 2021). In addition, it educates them about the importance of independence and the struggles of past heroes in achieving it (Putri *et al.*, 2020). In today's world, it seems that love for the homeland and diversity are beginning to decline. Media coverage of violence, student brawls, civil wars, and inter-ethnic conflicts is on the rise, indicating that diversity is seen not as a valuable asset but as a means of power (Pangetsu, 2022). The foundations of this nation help in its swift recovery, enabling it to face global challenges and rise stronger to lead Indonesia forward (Ramadhani *et al.*, 2022).

Events held during Independence Day celebrations effectively inspire the younger generation (Saputri *et al.*, 2023). Events are a form of entertainment and a creative educational tool for teaching national values and diversity (Fathony *et al.*, 2023). In every competition, we can integrate educational elements that foster a deep understanding of the importance of love for the homeland, unity, and tolerance among ethnic groups and religions (Rafsanjani, 2022). Through these competitions, we can create a learning atmosphere that is informative and enjoyable. Encouraging young people to actively participate in competitions, either as participants or organizers, can grow a sense of belongingness to these national values. As a result, they celebrate independence as a historical event and internalize its meaning and values.

Thematic Community Service Program (KKNT) is one of the mandatory community service programs for students at the Indonesia University of Education. One of the KKNT UPI programs was implemented in Sukahurip Village. One of the programs implemented during the KKNT UPI in Sukahurip Village was the commemoration of independence. This article aims to document and analyze the competitions held during the 78th Independence Day celebration in Sukahurip Village. The other objective is to enhance nationalistic feelings and pride in the Indonesian nation, which has been independent for 78 years.

METHODS

In the Thematic Community Service Program (KKNT), the research method used is descriptive, focusing on observation. Observation is the primary approach to describing events and occurrences objectively (Fadli, 2021). By relying on observation, this research aims to gain a deep understanding of the reality in the field (Nurahma & Hendriani, 2021).

Through observation, the KKN research team can directly observe and record various activities, interactions, and dynamics in the thematic context that is the focus of the research (Adlini dkk., 2022). Using the observation method allows researchers to detail various aspects of an event without excessive intervention, resulting in more accurate and representative data (Assyakurrohim, 2023). The advantage of the observation method in descriptive research is its ability to record information visually and detect nuances that may be difficult to explain with words alone. This helps the research team present a more complete and in-depth picture of the observed situation (Yusanto, 2020).

Through this approach, KKNT research can make a meaningful contribution to describing and analyzing the thematic context that is the focus of the research. Direct observation of activities and dynamics in the field allows researchers to holistically understand the challenges, opportunities, and impacts of various aspects of the theme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The event was held over two days to celebrate Indonesia's Independence Day and took place offline in Sukahurip Village. The event began on August 17, 2023, with the 78th Independence Day ceremony held at Merdeka Field in Sukahurip Village, attended by all residents of Sukahurip wearing various unique uniforms or attire.

Following the independence ceremony, the competition activities were held as an active form of community participation in celebrating independence. Various types of competitions, such as a carnival parade, traditional dance competition, and gate decoration contest, were organized to engage the entire community. Through these competitions, the community expressed their creativity and strengthened their sense of unity and love for their homeland. The two-day competition activities serve as an effective means to ignite the spirit and pride of being part of the Indonesian nation. Additionally, involving all residents in these festive activities positively impacts social solidarity and strengthens relationships among residents in Sukahurip Village.



Figure 1. Indonesian Independence Day Ceremony
Source: Author's documentation 2023

Figure 1 shows the atmosphere of the ceremony commemorating the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. During the August 17 Independence Day celebrations, KKN students collaborated with villagers to enliven the event by holding several competitions. The following are the various competitions that were held.

Carnival Competition

The Carnival Competition is one activity that showcases each hamlet's creativity in Sukahurip. The form and nature of this activity is a carnival celebrating the development of the Sukahurip region, presented in a creative, attractive, appreciative, innovative, evaluative, and competitive parade. Creative presentation is the main focus of this carnival. Each participant is expected to present innovative and captivating ideas that reflect the spirit of appreciation for the cultural diversity and natural wealth of Sukahurip. Participants are invited to express their ideas for regional development in an interesting and inspiring way. The attractive and competitive aspects are also integral parts of this carnival competition. Each participant will be evaluated not only based on the aesthetic appeal of their performance but also on their ability to impact local development positively. Evaluations will be conducted carefully, considering aspects such as sustainability, community participation, and contributions to the socio-economic development of Sukahurip.



Figure 2. Carnival Competition
Source: Author's documentation 2023

Figure 2 shows the atmosphere of the carnival competition. Through the carnival competition, it is hoped that the people of Sukahurip will continue to be inspired to get involved in the development of their region. The creativity displayed in the carnival is not only entertainment but also a source of motivation to bring about positive change. This event is not merely a competition but also a form of appreciation and collective effort toward achieving progress for Sukahurip.

Dongdang Competition

This competition is also known as a creative tumpeng-making competition, with the tumpeng paraded around Merdeka Square. The competition builds social solidarity among the residents of Sukahurip Village. Dongdang competition participants are invited to present tumpeng, which is not only delicious but also visually appealing. Creativity and innovation are the key elements, with each team striving to add a unique touch that reflects the identity and character of the Sukahurip community. The tumpeng is then paraded at Merdeka Square, creating a spectacular sight that not only brings pride to the participants but also unites the entire community. Through this Dongdang competition, social solidarity in Sukahurip Village is further strengthened. The preparation of the tumpeng involves not only the participants but also the active participation of the entire community. The spirit of cooperation and mutual support in the preparation and support for one another are the main drivers in creating a warm sense of togetherness and strengthening the bonds between residents in Sukahurip Village.



Figure 3. Dongdang Competition
Source: Author's documentation 2023

Figure 3 shows the atmosphere of the dongdang competition. This competition not only serves as a forum to showcase creativity in making tumpeng but also as a medium to foster a sense of togetherness and pride in the cultural heritage of Sukahurip Village. The Dongdang Competition is not merely an event or a symbolic gathering; it is a significant occasion that enriches social bonds and strengthens the foundation of solidarity among the community living under the shadow of the beauty of Merdeka Square.

Gapura Decoration Competition

This gapura decoration competition is a contest between hamlets in Sukahurip Village. The contestants compete to decorate gapura with the theme of Indonesia's 78th Independence Day. The gapura will be judged by a panel of judges, and the hamlet with the highest score will be declared the winner. Participants in the gapura decoration competition are invited to showcase their creativity in arranging decorative elements that reflect the spirit of struggle and nationalism. The gapura serves as a canvas for expression, with colors, ornaments, and visual messages that create a festive and meaningful atmosphere. The judging panel will conduct a thorough evaluation, focusing on details, originality, and alignment with the theme. This competition is not merely a contest but also an opportunity to strengthen unity among the villages in Sukahurip Village. The preparation and execution of the competition provide residents with a chance to collaborate, share ideas, and celebrate the spirit of independence together. Additionally, community participation in the gapura decoration competition is a manifestation of support and commitment to the Independence Day celebrations. **Figure 4** shows the gapura decorations created by the residents of Sukahurip Village for the competition.



Figure 4. Gapura Decorating Competition
Source: Author's documentation 2023

The village that achieves the highest score from the judging panel will be announced as the winner. This victory is not only a source of pride for the village but also solidifies its position in commemorating the historic moment of Indonesia's independence. The gate decoration competition serves as a form of honor and appreciation for the struggles of the heroes while also fostering a sense of nationalism among the residents of Sukahurip Village.

Many Other Competitions Common on August 17 7

The second day of activities was held on August 20, 2023, in the residents' yards. During this event, we held competitions for the residents of Sukahurip. There were 10 competitions, including 1) cracker eating contest, 2) sack race, 3) centing contest, 4) cardboard box racing, 5) straw relay race, 6) cardboard box racing, 7) feeding contest, 8) sarong racing, 9) chair grabbing contest, and 10) threading a needle contest. The various competitions held aim to foster a sense of love for the country by remembering the struggles of the heroes (Luthfillah & Rachman, 2022). In addition, this also aims to commemorate the history of the nation's struggle appreciate the noble values of the nation, and the cultural diversity of Indonesia (Awaliyah *et al.*, 2022). The first benefit of this activity is to foster a sense of patriotism among the residents of Sukahurip. The competitions held during the 78th Independence Day celebrations are not merely entertainment but also a form of respect for the struggles of the heroes (Utomo *et al.*, 2022). Through various activities, the community is reminded of the meaning of independence and the noble values of the nation (Suryana & Dewi, 2021).

These competitions contribute to commemorating the history of the nation's struggle. Each competition event is carefully designed to reflect important moments in Indonesia's independence history. Participants and spectators are invited to reflect and remember, reminding them of the preciousness of the independence that was fought for by their predecessors. Another benefit is the effort to appreciate the noble values of the nation and promote Indonesia's cultural diversity (Amanah *et al.*, 2023). By involving various types of competitions that combine cultural aspects, this activity creates an inclusive platform for the Sukahurip community. This not only enriches their experience but also strengthens the sense of unity in diversity (Siagian & Alia, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The two-day competition held in Sukahurip Village during the 78th anniversary of Indonesian Independence Day had a significant positive impact. Through various competitions, such as a carnival, a traditional dance competition, and a gate decoration contest, the people of Sukahurip were able to experience a sense of togetherness and intense patriotism. These competitions were not merely entertainment events but also served as a means to cultivate a love for the homeland by remembering the struggles of our heroes. The history of the nation's struggle was also highlighted through each carefully designed competition category. More than just a competition, this event is a form of appreciation for the noble values of the nation and the diversity of Indonesian culture. Social solidarity in Sukahurip Village is further strengthened through active participation in competitions, such as the dongdang competition, which involves community cooperation in preparation. The creativity and innovation displayed in the carnival competition and gate decoration competition also serve as inspiration for involvement in local development. This event successfully created moments that enriched social relationships, nurtured a spirit of nationalism, and strengthened the foundation of solidarity in Sukahurip Village. Overall, the 78th Independence Day celebration in Sukahurip Village, through the competition activities, successfully became a concrete effort to preserve and strengthen national values and cultural diversity in Indonesia. Moving forward, the team can continue this program, whether through community service or research, by evaluating the long-term impact of activities such as the competitions that have been held, how participation in the competitions influences community awareness, social solidarity, and participation in local development, which need to be understood more deeply.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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