

Optimization of Museums as Learning Media Through the *Melali Sambilang Melajah* Program to Increase Students' Interest in Learning History

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Abstract

Character formation through history learning can be achieved when students understand the meaning and values embedded in historical events. History education contributes to the development of nationalism, patriotism, civic responsibility, democratic attitudes, humanitarian awareness, and cultural insight rooted in noble historical values. However, these objectives require increased student interest in learning history, which can be fostered through innovative learning programs and the effective use of educational media. This study aims to analyze the optimization of museums as learning media through the *Melali Sambilang Melajah* program to enhance students' interest in learning history. The research employed a qualitative approach using literature review, observation, and interviews as data collection methods. The literature review examined books, academic journals, seminar proceedings, and related studies on museums, history learning, instructional media, historical sites, and student learning interest. Observations and interviews were conducted at the Bali Museum and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument to examine their relevance to high school history learning. The findings indicate: (1) the strong relevance of the collections at the Bali Museum and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument to history learning materials in senior high school; and (2) the implementation of the *Melali Sambilang Melajah* program effectively optimizes museums as educational media while increasing students' interest in learning. Historical artifacts and dioramas provide concrete visual representations of past events, enabling students to contextualize historical narratives and emotionally engage with historical experiences. Consequently, museums and monuments function not only as heritage preservation institutions but also as effective educational media that enhance students' learning interest.

Keywords: Nationalism; Democracy; Museums; Monuments

Introduction

The history learning that takes place in schools shows the decreasing enthusiasm of students to participate in the history learning process with full seriousness. This is based on the results of the author's observations and the author's interviews with several students who stated that the lesson was less exciting if it was only in class, let alone just a story without seeing a picture of a struggle. So far, some teachers still use the lecture method so it seems boring. This fact is in line with student recognition (Kartawidjaja, 1987; Suryabrata, 2006).

Students complain that the role of teachers is still dominant, there are a lack of activities that stimulate students' creativity so that learning still feels less meaningful. We can also observe that quite a few children are sleepy or just participate in studying history, especially since this lesson seems to be memorized and can be studied at home (Purwanto, 1988). Even though history learning has an important role in forming national character. Character formation through history learning can be done if students are able to

understand the meaning of each historical event (Purwanto, 1988). The character of nationalism, the spirit of patriotism, recognizing mistakes in past decisions, a sense of responsibility and democracy, citizenship, a sense of humanity, and insight into developing cultural human resources by recognizing the noble values of history. This can be achieved by increasing students' interest in studying history, so it is necessary to develop learning programs that students can use as a learning medium through selecting good material.

The selection of materials and the formulation of learning objectives in history education should not be regarded as merely routine administrative tasks. Rather, they require a comprehensive understanding of the nature of historical inquiry and the educational value of history in shaping students' perspectives on contemporary and future life. In addition, their implementation demands professional commitment, pedagogical sensitivity, and sustained effort. This issue becomes increasingly significant when history teachers seek to develop or implement innovative instructional strategies, such as integrating chronological and thematic approaches. Such pedagogical development aligns with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum for senior high school history, which emphasizes higher-order thinking skills. Students are expected to analyze relationships among multiple factors, identify and formulate core concepts or theories, conduct evaluations based on internal and external criteria, and produce original ideas. To support the achievement of these competencies, a contextual and experiential learning program is required. Therefore, the *Melali Sambilang Melajah* program is proposed as an alternative instructional strategy designed to enhance students' engagement and interest in history learning while supporting the development of analytical and creative competencies.

The *Melali Sambilang Melajah* (MSM) program is an instructional initiative designed to be implemented across primary and secondary education levels, including senior high schools. The program name, derived from the Balinese language, was intentionally selected to ensure cultural relevance and familiarity for students in Bali. The lexical choice of *melali* (to travel or to walk around) rather than *melajah* (to study) is based on pedagogical and psychological considerations. The term *melali* conveys a sense of exploration and enjoyment, thereby fostering positive affective engagement among students. This linguistic framing is expected to reduce the perception of academic burden and increase students' intrinsic motivation to participate in the program. Although the program originates in Bali, its nomenclature may be adapted into regional languages in other areas, provided that the core meaning and pedagogical objectives remain consistent. Conceptually, the MSM program integrates classroom-based instruction with museum-based learning environments. Students participate in structured educational visits to museums as part of a learning consolidation process, particularly in history subjects.

Through direct engagement with historical artifacts, exhibitions, and dioramas, students are encouraged to connect theoretical knowledge acquired in the classroom with tangible historical evidence. This experiential approach is intended to enhance students' enthusiasm for learning while simultaneously developing creativity, critical thinking skills, and scientific inquiry competencies (Hamalik, 2008). Furthermore, the MSM program aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly its emphasis on differentiated learning and student-centered pedagogical practices. By providing authentic learning experiences outside the conventional classroom setting, the program supports the development of higher-order thinking skills and meaningful learning experiences. In the MSM program, processes using a scientific approach can be carried out and students will become very interested in learning, because besides learning through a scientific approach, they can also have recreation and selfie when visiting museums or other historical places.

Therefore, the program will have an impact on optimizing the use of museums and historical places as a medium for learning history and in an effort to increase students' interest in learning. Optimizing museums is very important because so far students rarely know about museums and do not know the information they can get from museums, so that the function of museums can be utilized by students. From the results of a survey conducted at SMA 9 Denpasar, almost 90% of class XI students had never been to a museum.

This study focuses on two cultural institutions in Bali, namely the Bali Museum and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument, as primary research sites. The Bali Museum operates as a Technical Implementation Unit under the Bali Provincial Culture Office, with the main responsibilities of collecting, documenting, conserving, researching, and exhibiting cultural artifacts for educational, research, and recreational purposes. As a cultural preservation institution, the museum plays a strategic role in supporting history learning through its collections and interpretative displays. The Balinese People's Struggle Monument functions as a commemorative and educational site dedicated to preserving the historical legacy of the Balinese people's struggle.

Its management is oriented toward safeguarding and strengthening cultural heritage values, particularly those related to identity, resilience, and collective memory. These values were shaped through a long historical process involving efforts to maintain traditions, rights, and cultural identity amid social and political challenges. As such, the monument represents not only a symbol of historical resistance but also a potential learning resource that contextualizes historical narratives within students' sociocultural environment. Based on this context, the present study examines the implementation of the *Melali Sambilang Melajah* program in optimizing museums and historical monuments as media for history learning and in enhancing students' interest in learning.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the implementation of the *Melali Sambilang Melajah* program in optimizing museums as media for history learning and enhancing students' interest in learning. Data were collected through literature review, observation, and interviews. The literature review was conducted by examining relevant scholarly sources, including books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and academic publications related to museums, history education, instructional media, historical sites, and students' learning interest. This stage aimed to establish the theoretical and conceptual foundation of the study. Field observations were carried out at the Bali Museum and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument. The observations focused on the relevance of museum collections to senior high school history learning materials. The aspects observed included historical artifacts, dioramas, exhibition narratives, spatial layout, and contextual information presented in the museum environment. Data obtained from observations were documented through field notes and photographic records to ensure accuracy and alignment with empirical conditions. In addition, unstructured interviews were conducted with site administrators and relevant officials at both locations. The interviews aimed to obtain in-depth information regarding museum management, educational functions, and the potential integration of museum resources into history learning. The unstructured format allowed flexibility in exploring emerging themes relevant to the research objectives. The collected data were analyzed descriptively through data reduction, categorization, and interpretation to identify patterns related to the optimization of museums as learning media.

Results And Discussion

1. The Relevance of the Bali Museum Collection and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument in History Lessons

The relevance of the Balinese Museum and Balinese People's Struggle Monument collections in History lessons is limited to the main material contained in the 2013 Curriculum for high school class X and class XI according to the author's grade level. The dioramas at the Balinese People's Struggle Monument show historical scenes in three-dimensional form which are equipped with various models of human dolls, animals and equipment used at the time of the historical events, although they are not exactly the same. It is hoped that the three-dimensional depiction of the diorama will make it easier for visitors from various ages and educational backgrounds to understand the nature, situation and atmosphere that reflect the conditions at the time the event occurred.

Each diorama unit is also equipped with other conveniences for understanding the object being observed, namely a brief explanation of the historical events that occurred at that time. Chronologically, this diorama starts from the prehistoric period, starting from the southern part of the diorama turning to the right following a clockwise direction. Based on the results of observations and literature review, according to the historical relics collected at the Bali Museum and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument, their relevance to the main subject matter of history can be described. Based on observations, at the Bali Museum in the East Building, Floor-I, there is a collection of Prehistory and History of Bali.

Collectible objects relics from the prehistoric era include the simple level of hunting and gathering, the advanced level of hunting and gathering of food, the farming period and the perundagian period. In this collection, the tools used in each prehistoric era are exhibited. Meanwhile, the historical period collections are grouped into three periods, namely the Ancient Balinese Period, the Middle Balinese Period, and the New Balinese Period. This collection is relevant to the main material for class By visiting the Bali Museum, students will know more and see more clearly the remains of each era.

Likewise, this material has relevance to the diorama at the Balinese People's Struggle Monument. The diorama presented is Bali during the hunting and gathering period (3000 BC). In this diorama there are ancient human activities *Pithecanthropus erectus* was hunting wild boar with a hand ax and picking fruit. This diorama also shows Bali during the Perundagian Period (200 BC). The appearance of the doll gives the impression of being in the atmosphere of the event. An overview of the collection is presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. (a) Examples Of Several Collections From The Bali Museum Collection From The Pre-Literate Era, (b) Pre-Literate Diorama at the Balinese People's Struggle Monument (Source: Journalist Team)

The collection on the second floor of the east building of the Bali Museum presents empirical evidence regarding the peaks of Balinese civilization in various aspects of life. Analysis of artifacts such as kepeng coins, chili statues, and keris provides deep insight into the interaction between local Balinese culture and external influences, especially Chinese culture. This acculturation process produces forms of cultural expression that are unique and typical of Bali. This collection has high relevance to history lesson material at the high school level, especially regarding the Hindu-Buddhist period in Indonesia.

The dioramas displayed are related to the Hindu kingdom, namely the period of the Hindu kingdom in Bali, namely each diorama from the time of Sri Kesari Warmadewa (914 AD), Gunapria Dharmapatni and her husband Dharmodayana Warmadewa (981-1011 AD), Sri Asta Sura Ratna Bumi Bantes (1338 AD), Coronation of Sri Kresna Kepakisan (1347-1350 AD), Dalem Waturenggong (1460-1550 AD), and the heyday of the Kingdoms in Bali (17th-19th Century AD). Apart from the kingdom, the diorama also presents the development of the religious and socio-cultural order taught by several figures such as Rsi Markandeya (8th Century AD), Empu Kuturan with the Three Heavens Concept (11th Century AD), Banjar Life (11th Century AD), the Subak System (11th Century AD), Construction of the Gelgel Basic Temple (14th Century AD), Arrival of Dang Hyang Nirartha (1489 AD). The existence of this diorama will certainly increase students' knowledge about the existence of the development of the kingdom in Bali. Several examples of dioramas are presented in Figure 2.



Picture 2. The Atmosphere During The Kingdom Period In Bali
(Source: Journalist Team)

Material regarding the Age of Development of Islamic Kingdoms in Indonesia has not found any relevance in the Bali Museum and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument. In the History lesson material for class XI, some of its relevance to the Bali Museum and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument can be described. The first material is the Development of Colonialism and Western Imperialism.

The diorama of the Balinese People's Struggle Monument brings up many scenes about this material, namely the events of Patih I Gusti Ketut Djelantik from the Buleleng Kingdom tearing up the Governor General's letter (1846 AD), the Jagaraga War (1848-1849 AD), the Kusamba War (1849 AD), the Banjar People's Resistance (1849 AD). 1868 AD), Puputan Badung (1906), Sagung Wah preparations against the Dutch (1906), Puputan Klungkung (1908). Meanwhile, at the Bali Museum, the people's struggle against the Dutch can be seen from the collection of cannons, rifles and spears from the time of war. The diorama scene will provide a very clear picture of the heroic struggle of the fighters against the Dutch. Some of the diorama scenes are presented in Figure 3.

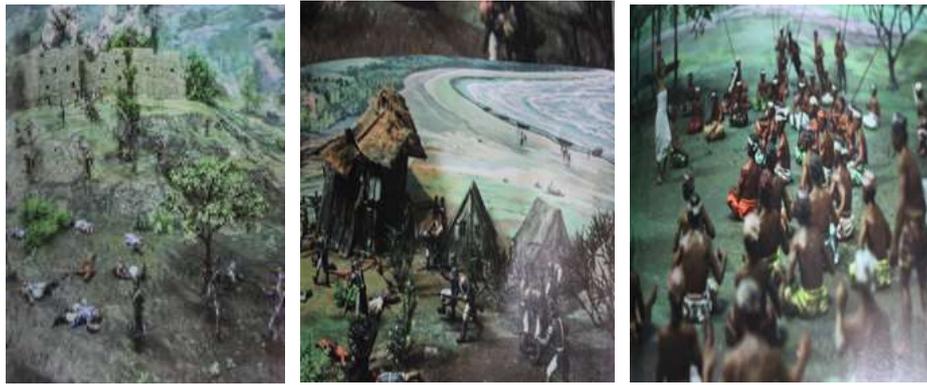


Figure 3. Several Dioramas of the Balinese People's Struggle
(Source: Journalist Team)

In the material on the Indonesian National Movement for high school class This diorama tells the story of I Gusti Putu Djelantik leading young people from among teachers, employees and Balinese community leaders in a meeting in one of the school rooms in Buleleng, the diorama can be presented in Figure 4 At the Bali Museum the relevance of the Indonesian national movement does not yet exist.



Figure 4. Diorama of the Indonesian National Movement
(Source: Journalist Team)

The Balinese People's Struggle Monument has relevance to class XI material, namely the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence. This is shown in the diorama Spreading the News of the Proclamation (1945). The spread of news about the Proclamation started with information from Mr. I Gusti Ketut Pudja, then assisted by youth in spreading the news of independence and flying the red and white flag in offices. An overview of the diorama is presented in Figure 5 The Bali Museum does not provide relevance to the events of the Proclamation of Indonesian Independence.



Figure 5. Diorama of the Dissemination of Proclamation News
(Source: Journalist Team)

In class Relevant dioramas are the Republic of Indonesia Youth Command Center (September 1945) with the figures I Gusti Ngurah Sindhu, Cokorde Sudarsana, Ida Bagus Tantra, and other figures; Diorama of the Flag Incident at Buleleng Harbor (27 October 1945); Naval Battle in the Bali Strait (1946), Attack on NICA Tangsi (1946); Establishment of the Lesser Sunda Indonesian People's Struggle Council (1946); Battle of Tanah Aron (1946); and Battle of Marga/Puputan Margarana (1946). An overview of the diorama is presented in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Diorama Of The Battle Against The Allies
(Source: Journalist Team)

Based on the explanation above, students can gain many things if activities are carried out by visiting museums or monuments, of course through the *Melali Sambilang Melajah* Program. This MSM is certainly supported by the relevance of museums and monuments regarding history lessons as learning media, namely non-projected viewing media, such as still images, graphics, models, real objects. So this will increase students' knowledge regarding history lessons, especially their interest in knowing historical events through the presence of real objects or dioramas displayed (Supriatna, 2001).

2. *Melali Sambilang Melajah* Program in Optimizing Museums and Increasing Student Interest in Learning

Given the strong relevance between history learning materials and the collections, artifacts, and dioramas exhibited at the Bali Museum and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument, the implementation of the *Melali Sambilang Melajah* (MSM) program is considered essential and sustainable. The program is not limited to senior high school students but may also be adapted for other educational levels, provided that the selected museums align with the respective curriculum content and learning objectives. The implementation of MSM is consistent with the scientific approach emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum. Learning within this framework is structured to engage students in inquiry-based processes, encouraging observation, questioning, data gathering, analysis, and communication of findings. Through museum-based learning experiences, students are guided to construct knowledge based on direct interaction with historical evidence.

Within a scientific learning framework, the development of the affective domain involves the internalization of values embedded in historical materials, enabling students to understand the underlying significance of events (knowing why). Meanwhile, the psychomotor and skills domains focus on the application and procedural understanding of knowledge (knowing how), which are fostered through active exploration, analysis of artifacts, and interpretative discussions during museum visits. Consequently, the MSM program not only enhances students' historical understanding but also supports the holistic development of attitudes, knowledge, and skills as mandated by the curriculum.

The realm of knowledge involves the transformation of teaching substances or materials so that students know what. The end result is an increase and balance between the ability to be a good human being (soft skills) and a human being who has the skills

and knowledge to live a decent life (hard skills) of students which includes the competency aspects of attitudes, skills and knowledge (Sudjana, 2004). The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes modern pedagogical dimensions in learning, namely using a scientific approach. Scientific approach (*scientific approach*) in learning as intended includes observing, asking, trying, processing, presenting, concluding and creating for all subjects.

The implementation of the MSM program will train students in carrying out scientific activities in history (Sudjana and Rivai, 2005). In the MSM program there are observation activities, which in this case are carried out in museums or monuments. In observing activities, students will determine what objects will be observed and data collection techniques, in this case historical events with relevance in museums or monuments. This program will also train students to ask questions so that the realm of questioning will be achieved. Because the questions that arise and are asked either to museum and monument officials or teachers will show good student interest in learning. Then, from observing and asking questions, students will be directed to make a report on the results of MSM activities. From making this report, students will experience a logical and systematic thinking process regarding empirical facts that can be observed to obtain conclusions in the form of knowledge. In terms of trying students, there are dioramas and relics in museums or monuments, students will try to understand the meaning of a relic or historical event (Sapriya, 2009).

The next activities, namely processing, presenting, concluding and creating, will develop automatically with the experiences experienced in the MSM program. Museums and Monuments are so useful in increasing students' interest in learning history, so with the MSM program, this can be optimized. This program is a program that can be used as a reference by teachers or the government in optimizing the role of museums for society. According to Alisyabana, as quoted by Sutarga (1962), museums are a modern educational tool.

The existence of museums in their function as educational media can play a role in bringing students closer to the realities of the past and can also serve as a guide for the future. In addition, according to Buchori (2001), education must also equip the younger generation to be able to overcome the shallowness of life so that their lives are more meaningful. In an educational context, museums can also play a role in providing information to learning subjects and the general public about various matters relating to science and technology as well as finding out about socio-cultural changes that surround people's lives in the context of their time. For the world of education, the existence of museums is very important (Sriyanti, 2009). This is because its existence is able to answer various questions that arise in the learning process, especially those related to the history of human development, culture and the environment. MSM Program activities are used to develop students' creative thinking abilities, one of which is by having a museum as a learning medium. Learning activities carried out in museums are a means for the emergence of new thoughts and ideas because in these activities students are stimulated to use their abilities in creative thinking optimally.

By finding interesting things in museums or monuments, students will feel interested in history lessons, which will of course increase students' interest in learning. Things that must also be considered in optimizing museums through the MSM program are that the relevance of existing museums to the subject matter to be studied must be studied, teachers apply a scientific approach to train students in carrying out scientific activities, so that this will encourage students to be enthusiastic about getting good grades. maximum. In this way, this program will be able to optimize the function of the museum and increase students' interest in learning.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate a clear relevance between Grade X and XI senior high school history learning materials and the collections displayed at the Bali Museum and the Balinese People's Struggle Monument. Although certain historical topics are not fully represented within museum collections, this limitation can be addressed through the careful selection and alignment of subject matter with available artifacts and exhibitions. Such alignment enables museums and monuments to function as complementary learning resources within the formal curriculum. The implementation of the *Melali Sambalang Melajah* program provides students with meaningful and engaging learning experiences by integrating classroom instruction with direct exposure to historical artifacts and dioramas. The visual and contextual representation of historical events allows students to develop a deeper understanding of historical narratives and fosters emotional and cognitive engagement. Consequently, the program optimizes the educational function of museums and monuments as learning media while contributing to increased student interest in history learning. By promoting experiential and contextual learning, the MSM program supports the broader objectives of history education in developing critical awareness and historical understanding.

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