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# The creative process of the Potehi puppet craftsman in Gudo Jombang

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## ABSTRACT

Potehi Puppet is one of the traditional arts in the form of hand puppet performances from China that developed in Java, one of which was in Gudo, Jombang. This article aims to describe the creative process of the Potehi Puppet artist/maker in Gudo, which is correlated with family background and life experiences. The author finds a relationship between difficult life experiences and artistic family background with the artist's creative energy so that he can survive and continue to develop his work in difficult artistic conditions. This explains that difficult life experiences are also needed in creativity in terms of creativity theory and psychology. The method used is descriptive qualitative with interview data collection techniques with three artists/makers of Potehi Puppet in Gudo, namely Toni, Sony, and Samsul. Data analysis uses several main theoretical bases, namely Primadi Tabrani's creativity theory, and Graham Wallas's creativity, and research by Marie J.C. Forgeard is about taking advantage of adversity for increased creativity. This article can inspire artists, especially traditional artists, to take advantage of life's difficulties as a stepping stone to increasing creative energy, endurance, and creativity.

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## 1. Introduction

Potehi Puppet is an art originating from China that was present in the archipelago in the 16-19 centuries brought by Chinese immigrants. The Potehi also called performance in hand, is a kind of puppet show in Fujian (*Hokkien*), Quanzhou city. The word Potehi comes from the southern Fujian dialect [1]. This Potehi Puppet originated in the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) and was highly developed during the Tang (618-907 AD) and Song (960-1279 AD) dynasties. Potehi's dialogues and songs use the Hokkien language and dialect with the theme of historical stories or Chinese *sinta* stories. In Indonesia, Potehi Puppet is about 300 years old and developed only in Java. Initially, the main function of the Potehi Puppet was for Confucian worship rituals, namely as a means of praying and pleasing the hearts of the gods. When Chinese immigrants entered the archipelago, Potehi Puppet also became a bridge between the local residents (Javanese). Therefore, in its development, Potehi Puppet no longer uses the pure Hokkien language but also uses Malay so that the community can more accept it. The development of the Potehi Puppet does not stop there; at this time, its development shows acculturation with Javanese culture. Currently, Potehi Puppet performances also use non-standard Indonesian, namely Indonesian, which Peranakan Chinese and Javanese generally use. This has pushed the Potehi Puppet in Indonesia to become an art that is quite different from the hand puppets in China. One of the conservationists of Potehi Puppet in Java is still active in the Hok Ho An (*Hokkien*)/Fu He An (Chinese national language) group in the Hong San Kiong Temple Gudo District, Jombang Regency, East Java. This group was created by a Chinese mastermind/*sehu* named Tok Su Kwie. Tok Su Kwie's role as the puppeteer was continued by

one of his children, Tok Hong Kie. It was Tok Hong Kie who developed the Potehi Puppet art so that it is closer to the community by using a mixture of low-level Malay, which is common among Peranakan Chinese.

Tok Hong Kie also continues to learn by reading several books to enrich his creativity in composing stories for performances. He is a careful *sehu*; the story he performs is summarized in the form of a book. Tok Hong Kie's job is not enough for his family's daily needs. The hardships of his life made Tok Hong Kie forbid his three children to be *sehu* and forbade him from being close to Puppet Potehi. Even though he has a difficult life and forbids his children to be close to Puppet Potehi, Tok Hong Kie remains a *sehu* to please the day of the Gods. The life difficulties experienced by Tok Hong Kie's family did not stop their second child from falling in love with Potehi Puppet, namely Tok Hok Lay or Toni Harsono. Based on the author's interview with Toni, his father would be angry if he was caught playing with Potehi. Even though it has forbidden, Toni has his own way of still struggling with the Potehi Puppet. Toni is now the chairman of Hok Ho An and the chairman of the Hong San Kiong Temple. He does not make Potehi Puppet his job; he currently owns a gold shop in Pare, Kediri but is a custodian of Potehi Puppet. He reproduced the Potehi Puppet, looked for responders, took care of the puppeteers in Hok Ho An, and even made the Potehi Museum next to the Hong San Kiong Temple.

Toni employs several people from within the Hok Ho An group and outside Hok Ho An to preserve the Potehi Puppet. One of the people whom Toni trusts are Sony Fran Asmara. Sony is the son of the puppeteer of Potehi Puppet named Sesomo, his mother is a puppeteer of *Wayang Kulit*, and his grandfather is a puppeteer of *Wayang Kulit*. Sony's main role is as *sehu*, besides being a musician (au-tau) and making Potehi Puppet paint, paint). Based on the author's interview with Sony, Sony is one of the Potehi Puppet activists in Gudo who deeply loves Potehi Puppet even though Potehi Puppet cannot bring in much money for himself and his family. Since he was young, Sony had a difficult life, his father's job as a puppeteer was not able to provide for his family's needs. His mother even sold used clothes several times so his family could eat. Until now, Sony admits that he is still working odd jobs. The difficulties of his life when he was young made him unable to continue his education to the high school level. However, the difficulties experienced by Sony do not seem to have dampened their desire and creativity to continue working on Potehi Puppet.

Besides Sony, another artist in Potehi Toni's project is Samsul Ma'aruf, who is believed to be the sculptor of Potehi's head, hands and feet. Based on the author's interview with Samsul, Samsul has a hobby of skills and is close to art. Samsul has been working on Puppet Potehi for five years. Before working on Potehi, he used to work on clocks with various shapes and wooden key chains. Other jobs as a Puppet maker Potehi are gravestone maker and orchestra musician. Samsul admitted that he did not know much about Potehi's art and only made it on orders and examples from Toni. The artist's creativity is influenced by many things such as his family background, social background, strength/ego, intelligence and talent he has. Many studies have tried to find the character of creative and ordinary artists. Creative playwrights have a freer, more independent and more dominant character. Creative playwrights are more likely to come from families that support their independence, have a better ability to sense connections between areas that are generally considered unrelated and prefer to try to find new problems rather than just solving pre-existing problems. This shows that there may be difficulties in life experienced by the Potehi Puppet artists in Gudo, encouraging independence and responsibility from an early age and encouraging creative thinking skills. In addition, the difficulties of life can also encourage a person to continue to think about ways to survive, which means encouraging thinking to solve problems. This is in line with Forgeard that life events affect creativity, such as famous writers Charlotte Emily and Anne Bronte, who were orphaned early on and forced to take responsibility and grow beyond what their age would expect [2].

Increased creativity after experiencing difficulties is a manifestation of PTG (Posttraumatic Growth). This is the reason for the author's interest. The author finds that there are similarities in the backgrounds of the three Potehi Puppet artists in Gudo, who persist in creating beyond material reasons. Creative thinking is the process of combining several categories of thinking or mental images both across and within domains, in a way that has never been done before, to

develop original and appropriate solutions to a situation or problem [3]. According to Botella et al., the creative process can occur differently in each individual, and there is no need to force all individuals to engage in the same process. Differences in this creative process can occur across the creators' fields, cultures, and personalities [4]. This is in line with Joyce's research which states that there are differences in the creative thinking of scientists and designers. Designers think divergently while scientists think convergent [5]. There are many opinions about the creative process, resulting in two tendencies of opinion, namely the unconscious creative thinking process and the conscious creative thinking process.

The unconscious creative thinking process is strongly tied to inspiration or ideas that suddenly occur, while the conscious creation process is a thinking process that is accompanied by hard labour and repeated experiments [6]. The conscious creation process has the concept that inspiration must be followed by hard work to produce work, and hard work can bring inspiration. Jung divided the works of art based on the creative process into two types, namely controlled art and unrestrained art. Controlled art is a work of purpose, and an artist has complete control over his work. Meanwhile, unrestrained art is a work produced by impulse, a hidden power that cannot be controlled by an artist. Creativity fosters a combination of reason and intuition to achieve goals. According to Jung, memories hidden in a person's personal unconscious can appear in works of art, so this shows that the unconscious can infiltrate the consciousness [7]. According to Silva, many artists have been inspired by sadness over the centuries [8]. Rembrandt struggled from adversity and endured it in a noble way; in addition, Vincent Van Gogh experienced many sorrows in his life and found inspiration in his grief as a working poor. Van Gogh felt solidarity with the suffering of others; and his paintings speak of these various sufferings very patiently [2] also chronicles the lives of famous writers Charlotte, Emily and Anne Bronte, who lost their mother and older sister in childhood, the effect of orphanage seems to be very strong on writers up to 55%. While losing a parent early on can have negative effects, it can also cause a child to take on adult responsibilities early on and grow beyond what was expected. Individuals exposed to adversity early in life may suffer from social isolation and, as a result, develop the ability to step outside of social conventions and see the world in a different light.

In line with this, Kim, Vincent and Goncalo in Forgeard show that the experience of social rejection fosters creative thinking in individuals who hold an independent self-concept by heightening feelings that are different from others [2]. The author does not discuss the artist in his performing role and only limits his role and the creative process in making Potehi Puppet. The author tries to explore the relationship between the background of the artist and the difficulties of life with the ability to work and be creative so that Hok Ho An still survives to this day. The artist interviewed was Toni, the chairman of Hok Ho An who also did the finishing of the Potehi Puppet and also managed the group. In addition, the artists interviewed were Sony, a puppeteer, musician and maker of Potehi Puppet and Samsul, a sculptor of Potehi Puppet. The study of the creative process discussed by the author focuses on the creative process of making Potehi Puppet, not on the creative process in performing activities. It is hoped that what the author finds in examining the background and creative process of the Potehi Puppet artists in Gudo can be an inspiration for other traditional artists to maintain their works despite difficulties.

## 2. Method

The method used by the author is descriptive qualitative research, whose activities are researching natural object conditions where the researcher is the key instrument [9]. Data collection techniques use triangulation, namely a combination of interviews, observation and documentation. Interviews were conducted with Toni Harsono (the chairman of Hok Ho An), Sony (the puppeteer, musician and wayang painter Potehi from Hok Ho An) and Samsul (the engraver of Wayag Potehi who worked with Toni). The head of Potehi Puppet and documenting through photos, videos and chat data with Sony. The data obtained were analyzed through critical thinking with theories of art psychology. Some of the main references used by the author are [10]–[14].

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. The Process of Making Potehi Puppets in the Hok Ho An / Fu He An Group

The process of making Puppet Potehi in the Hok Ho An group was carried out by many people, members of Hok Ho An themselves and outside Hok Ho An. There is no definite number of artists who make Potehi Puppet because the manufacturing process is very flexible, not targeted; if unemployed can work if busy, no need to work, no problem. The making of Potehi puppets is sometimes used as a spare time filler that generates additional income and sometimes also for a fun activity or spare time filler. The author does not focus on describing the process of making a technical form but rather on how the process of creation and cooperation in making Puppet Potehi in Hok Ho An, Gudo. The Potehi puppets made in the Hok Ho, An group, were led by Toni Harsono, the leader of the group. Toni gave the command and looked for people to work on Potehi. Based on the author's interview with Toni, there are many who made Potehi Puppet, including Asih, Alfian, and the late Pangat.

Tan Soen Bing (chief maker of Potehi) and several other artists from Tulungagung and Blitar. The division of work includes head makers, clothing makers, hat makers, painting Potehi and finishing. The technique of making Potehi Puppet was created by Toni himself, adjusting the existing tools and materials as well as existing abilities. Like the wood used is Waru wood, besides that, it is also trying to use Jackfruit tree wood. Toni himself did not understand what wood was often used by the original Chinese Puppet Potehi makers in ancient times. He decided to use Waru and Jackfruit wood because it was easy to get and also quite soft but not too hard. In addition, the texture of the wood is also quite tight, so it is suitable for Puppet Potehi. The original Chinese Puppet Potehi clothes use embroidery techniques, but Toni replaces them with embroidery techniques. However, for the detailed workmanship technique, Toni said the detail processing technique is different for everyone. In looking for craftsmen and artists to make Potehi Puppet, Toni only looked at his talent and did not care about his background. Even the majority of Potehi Puppet makers had Muslim-Javanese backgrounds and had never received formal art education, and even had major professions outside of sei, such as tombstone making and painting. Vehicle license plate.

Toni's main role in making the Potehi Puppet is as a drafter and curator. The idea of making Potehi under Toni's command could be from imitating the original Chinese Puppet Potehi, also from stories and could come from the puppeteer. Ideas that come from stories are usually imagined by Toni or the mastermind. Although Toni and the puppeteer have a personal creative process, Toni still thinks that a good Potehi Puppet is similar to the original Chinese Puppet Potehi. There are also Potehi puppets produced by Toni's team, which are still similar to the Chinese Potehi Puppets; some have shifted to their own characteristic forms. Toni has a plan to develop characters that are in accordance with the current era, such as Gusdur and Ki Enthus. However, the plan for the emergence of this new character is constrained by the ability of the mastermind, who is not yet able to play today's characters. Toni said that he had dreamed of educating the mastermind by learning through the puppeteer of *Wayang Purwa*. Some of the difficulties that Toni faced in producing the Potehi Puppets were the difficulty finding examples.

Toni looked for examples of Potehi Puppet in various cities and in China. If Toni wants to borrow *wayang* to be imitated is not always allowed. In addition, finding artists and craftsmen who can make Potehi Puppet is also a challenge because not all famous sculptors who have good works can produce good Potehi Puppet works as well. Besides the difficulty in the manufacturing process, another difficulty is in regenerating. One of the creators of the Potehi Puppet that Toni succeeded in regenerating was Samsul Ma'aruf, who was 37 years old when interviewed by the author (in 2020). Samsul's main occupation is tombstone maker and orchestra musician. Since the first, Samsul's hobby has been making crafts such as making wooden key chains and clocks in various shapes. Samsul started making Potehi Puppet five years ago, starting with making the hands and feet. He learned from his neighbor, who was also asked by Toni to make Puppet Potehi. Samsul had stopped for two years in making Puppet Potehi but Toni asked him to make Potehi again. The time of making one head is one day. Based on the author's interview with Samsul, he enjoys making Potehi Puppet because he likes to make crafts, does not have a target time for making it and is economically profitable.



Samsul admitted that one head made by him was valued at IDR 110,000 - IDR 150,000 by Toni, depending on the complexity of the fabric. Although the price of the Puppet Potehi that he produces is quite satisfactory for him, the work of making the Puppet Potehi does not always come. Sometimes there is no order; sometimes, you get up to 5 orders for Puppet Potehi heads from Toni in one week. In making it, Samsul used his own method and even made some of his own equipment. All materials were given by Toni, such as Waru wood and Jackfruit wood, and examples. Samsul admitted that he did not know about the Potehi Puppet characters; he only made them based on the examples given by Toni. Initially, Samsul made a template for the head shape by drawing it on cardboard based on the example given. Then the sample is cut and used as a reference when cutting wooden blocks with a saw. After the wooden blocks were cut according to the template, Samsul started making the head and neck shapes.

According to Toni's request, Samsul made Potehi's neck a wider oval in the front. After the head and neck were shaped, Samsul began to make general facial shapes using carving tools, knives, and caliper. Samsul did not make a sketch of the face. First, he immediately took measurements using a caliper on the sample given and applied it to the head of Potehi that he made. He marked his measurements by doing a few strokes with the tip of the caliper. After the face is detailed, make a hole in Potehi's neck with a drill and then smooth it with sandpaper. The manufacturing process carried out by Samsul was only up to the formation of the head, hands, and feet; those who did the painting and finishing were Toni, Sony, and other Hok Ho An members in their spare time. Samsul admitted that in making the Potehi Puppet, he only followed Toni's request and all revisions Toni gave. He just improvised on the shape of the ear. So he said that the Potehi Puppet with special ear shapes like his was the Potehi Puppet that he made.

In addition to Toni and Samsul, the writer also conducted interviews with Sony, a puppeteer of Potehi Puppet, musician of Potehi Puppet performance and maker of Potehi Puppet (painting and painting), which Toni succeeded in regenerating. He is one of the puppeteers who continues his father's profession, Sesomo, who is also the puppeteer of the Potehi Puppet (*sehu*). Sony is a member of Hok Ho An, who is trusted by Toni to create the Potehi Puppet. Sony admits that he has had a hobby of painting since childhood but only follows the seasons. He has created several characters in the Potehi Puppet according to his own story and interpretation. Sony's idea came from story books, Puppet shows in various countries and classical Chinese opera masks. The creation he did was in the process of painting Potehi's face. The shape of Potehi's head that he got from an engraver is still general enough that he has room to provide much detail in colouring, and that is what builds Potehi's character. Sony admits that he has different tastes from Toni regarding the Potehi Puppet. For him, a good Potehi Puppet is one that looks alive and can be spoken to.






This shows the very personal taste of a Sony. Sony confessed that he liked the masks of classical Chinese opera and was therefore very influenced by painting the Potehi Puppet. One of the characters in Sony's painting that is influenced by the classic Chinese mask is Pao Kui, the son of Pao Bun Cin or judge Bao. It is said that Hakim Bao has black skin, so Sony interprets Pao Kui as his father, who is black, so he paints Pao Kui's face black with a slight white accent. Another character created by Sony is Ngo Thian Sik, who has a violent character; he likes to eat human hearts but actually has a good heart because he helps rebellions to uphold justice. To show this ferocity and fierce impression, Sony painted Ngo Thian Sik's face in white, brown, yellow and red colours and was rich in motifs. In addition, there is a Hiong Huat Thai character who has the same character as Ngo Thian Sik. Hiong Huat Thai is said to have fought with Ngo Thian Sik for three days and three nights but no one lost. Sony painted the face of Hiong Huat Thai in a similar way to painting Ngo Thian Sik, [Table 1](#).

### 3.2. Potehi Puppet Artist Background in Hok Ho An / Fu He An Group

The artist's background, experience, aesthetic and artistic experience, family, social environment, talent, and intelligence influence the artist's creation and the process of creating his artwork. In the creation of works of art, there is a process of creation within a certain period of time. During the artistic process, he is controlled by his aesthetic experience [\[15\]](#). The creation of works of art is a work of self-disclosure and self-expression in the form of an art

object. The correlation between the social environment and the artist's creative process is also in line with Skinner's theory that artistic creation is a behaviour that can be seen and is an act of strengthening the environment [16]. Talent, although until now the definition is not clear and is better known as genetic inheritance, it has a role in the creation process and the creative process of artists. The recognition of talent is perhaps the driving force behind the development of the personality that is the hallmark of the artist [17].

**Table 1.** Sony's Potehi Puppet Character

Character Name	Figure	Characteristics Interpreted by Sony	Reference
Pao Kui		Has a face similar to his father, Judge Bao / Pao Bun Cin, who is black	 Pao Bun Cin / Judge Bao . Chinese classical opera mask
Ngo Thian Sik		Violent likes to eat human hearts. But actually, he has a good heart because he cooperates in the rebellion to uphold justice.	 Ngo Thian Sik's character from Taiwan
Hiong Huat Thai		Having a character similar to Ngo Thian Sik, it is said that he once fought with Ngo Thian Sik, but no one lost	-

Each of the Potehi Puppet artists at Gudo has their own background and experience, but all three have one thing in common, namely that they never studied formal art, grew up in an artistic family, and experienced many difficulties in life. Kuardhani reviews the background of Toni's life a lot [18]. Toni Harsono/Tok Hok Lay is the third generation of the original Chinese puppeteer Potehi. His grandfather Tok Su Kwie came from China to Java as a *sehu* who lived a simple life with his wife, Djwa Twe Nio. Even though he is a *sehu*, even though it is only enough to live a simple life with his family, Tok Su Kwie considers running a Potehi Puppet performance worship, a noble ritual that will please the Gods so that the gods will protect them from the various complexities of life and calamities and bestow them with fortune always. Therefore, Tok Su Kwie still hopes that his son will someday continue his profession as *sehu*. He has three children, namely Tok Kim Hwa (Hartatik), Tok Giok Lian (Sumiatun) and Tok Hong Kie. One of his children, Tok Hong Kie, continued his father's profession as a *sehu* under the guidance of Pek Liu Kie, a friend of his father's because Tok Su Kwie died before he could educate his son as a *sehu*. Tok Hong Kie, like his father, has a simple life as a *sehu* with his wife, Koo Trien Nio and his three children, Tok Eng Siau, Tok Hok Lay (Toni Harsono) and Tok Hok Gwan. Tok Hong Kie's life with his family is difficult enough that he once lived in a former chicken coop which was the result of a neighbor's mercy. Until finally, Tok Hong Kie's family was asked to be the guardian of the Hong San Kiong Temple, Gudo and live in the temple. Despite having a difficult life as a *sehu*, Tok Hong Kie remains loyal to his profession because the *sehu* profession is a profession that can please Thian (God). The summary of the play performed by Tok Hong Kie used the Indonesian Peranakan Chinese dialect, which was formerly known as Low Malay, namely the lingua franca or language of instruction among the Chinese community in Indonesia,

especially Java. Tok Hong Kie regenerates several *sehu* such as Thi Tiong Gie and Sesomo (*sehu* with Javanese ethnicity, Sony's father Fran Asmara).

Born and raised close to Potehi, Tok Hok Lay / Toni Harsono has a deep love for Potehi. He often sees Tan Soen Bing and Gunawan (Liem Sing Tjwan) making Puppet Potehi. Therefore Toni has a sensitivity to the forms, physiognomy and painting of Potehi puppets. However, his love for Potehi did not get good support from his father. His father forbade his children to be close to Potehi Puppet because he did not want his son to have a difficult life like him. When Toni was a teenager (SMP), her father, Tok Hong Kie died. The death of his father made him devastated, and Toni's teenage life became a naughty and harsh child, but at the same time loyal to friends and easily compassionate to others. when he attended SMA PGRI Jombang, he did not go up to grade so he moved to SMA Kalam Kudus Malang. Teenagers without his father's supervision caused Toni to often act out by skipping school, fighting and speeding on the streets. Toni managed to finish his bad time as a teenager and continued his studies at ITN (National Institute of Technology), majoring in Industrial Engineering in Malang. However, Toni did not continue his studies; he finally focused on trading gold with the support of his brother-in-law, Hendra Gunawan (Sia Kok Hwie). He started trading gold in a shop he rents in Pare to this day. After trading gold and having money, his love for Potehi grew so much that Toni was determined to revive and revitalize the Potehi Puppet show. Toni, who is currently well-known as the guardian of the Potehi Puppet to foreign countries, has had a long journey. His first attempt to revitalize Potehi Puppet was to look for original models of Potehi Puppet to reproduce them. He began to collect old dolls that belonged to his grandfather, which had been handed over to the Hong San Kiong Temple. Then he looked for people who could reproduce the Potehi Puppets. The people who made Potehi Puppet with Toni varied and varied; some of them were Sony and Samsul. When the writer came to Samsul's residence, Samsul's house was in the village of Gudo and in a very simple house, still in the same yard as his mother's house. In front of his house is lined with tombstones which shows that Samsul's main occupation was as a tombstone maker. The room where he works is in the back room of his house, next to a traditional-looking kitchen (*pawon*) equipped with a traditional stove/*tumang*. The room where he works is just a small room with cement floors and brick walls.

Samsul does not have a formal art education background, his family is not familiar with the art, but his association is quite familiar with the art world. Since childhood, he has had a hobby of crafts and skills. He admits that he has "liked to make complicated things" for a long time ago. Before making Potehi, he made wooden clocks in various shapes, such as piano shapes, and made wooden key chains in various shapes. Samsul often works based on orders from other people regarding crafts. In addition, he is a travelling orchestra musician who is considered at various events, especially weddings. Samsul admitted that he did three things for his job, namely making tombstones, orchestrating musicians and making Puppet Potehi. Besides Samsul, the writer also conducted an interview with Sony Fran Asmara, a *sehu*, musician and maker of Potehi Puppet (doing painting). Sony was born into an artistic family. His father, Seosomo, was a *sehu*, his mother was a *sinden Wayang Kulit*, and his grandfather was a puppeteer of *Wayang Kulit*. Apart from family, he also has a close relationship with the arts, especially musicians. During two interviews with Sony, the writer captures that Sony has a deep love for the arts, especially Puppet Potehi and melodic traditional Chinese music. Like Toni, Sony grew up in a very simple family, and he only attended junior high school due to limited funds. His mother sold used clothes several times so the family could eat. Sony is the third child of 3 siblings. His siblings all had artistic talents. Sony and his two brothers used to be Potehi Puppet artists, but currently, only Sony is struggling with Potehi. Another brother became the head of the village and became an election musician. This is because there is not much money in Potehi. Sony is also very aware of this, but because of his love for Potehi Puppet, he even feels that he is at one with traditional Chinese music. Sony's call to survive in Potehi Puppet is to provide a good spectacle and guidance to the public.

In his youth, when he graduated from junior high school, that was when Sony had to be independent and responsible for his own life, including his own living expenses. Sony did not intend to drop out of school; he initially planned to work 1-2 years first and then continue to high school, but because he was already working, Sony was reluctant to continue. When Sony

graduated from junior high school in 1992, the New Order government banned Chinese cultural performances and all things Chinese, so Sony did not work as a *sehu*, but instead became a chef at a depot in Samarinda. When his father was sick, Sony returned home to Gudo, apologizing to his father that he could not continue his father's work as *sehu*. At that time, all of his father's puppeteering equipment had been handed over to Potehi artists in various cities, including Toni. After his father died of lung cancer, Toni invited Sony to become a Potehi Puppet artist. Toni thinks that Sony has a good ability to master Potehi, so it is a shame to have to stop. Then Sony continued to learn puppetry self-taught and was corrected by Toni. Sonny admitted that in making the Potehi Puppet, he studied for less than five years. Currently, Sony works odd jobs such as making bonsai and sending sand. His heavy life since childhood caused his own trauma with Potehi Puppet. It's not only about the economy but also people's appreciation of the Potehi Puppet artists. Sony said that he had been welcomed into a temple and was not given a place to stay, even though the temple had lots of empty rooms. Sony considers this to be a form of disrespect for the Potehi Puppet artist. For him, the misery of two generations (his father and himself) as a Potehi Puppet artist was enough, so he forbade his son to be close to Potehi Puppet even if his children were interested. From the backgrounds of the three Potehi Puppet artists in Gudo, it is Samsul (the engraver) who has the most different background. He was not born into a family that was close to the arts, nor did he have the difficulties of living as hard as Toni and Sony. Samsul also has a different position with Toni and Sony. He made Puppet Potehi by order only and had little space to create ideas; his creations only revolved around manufacturing techniques. Samsul is also not very familiar with Puppet Potehi, as evidenced by his ignorance of the character of the Potehi Puppet that he made. Meanwhile, Toni and Sony have the same background, were born into artists' families, have no formal art learning experience, and experienced economic difficulties in their youth (Toni is no longer experiencing economic hardship, but Sony is still experiencing it), and father died at a young age, has demands to be independent and responsible from a young age and love the art of Potehi Puppet. Therefore, Toni and Sony have many dreams, imaginations, desires and visions about Potehi Puppet. In addition, they can be creative in making Puppet Potehi, make their own characters without imitating and are able to live what they make.

### 3.3. The Creative Process of Potehi Puppet Artists in Hok Hokan / Fu He Group

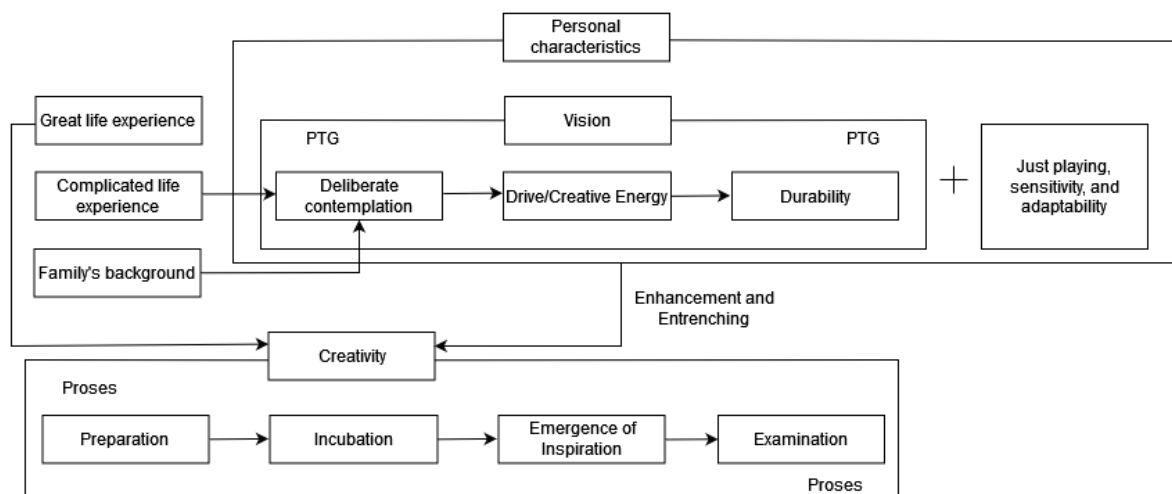
All humans have creativity, and humans integrate their physical, creative and rational abilities. The creative process is the integration of creative abilities with physical abilities and ratios, dynamic integration in appreciation, where creative abilities play a bigger role than their role in the simple integration process [19]. The creative process and the creative process both have similarities, and the slight difference is that the creative process involves a thorough appreciation. The characteristics of creativity are the urge to play, the urge to image, the urge to feel, the urge to move, aesthetics, openness, courage, spontaneity and vision. These characteristics can be summarized into three things, namely, imagination, feeling and movement. The personal characteristics of creative creators are whimsical, distinctive, sensitive, flexible, free, passionate and contemplative, which can be summarized into three things, namely: (1) critical; (2) cooperative; (3) creative. This is in line with Weisberg's that scientists and designers have high flexibility in creative thinking [20]. Based on the description above, the Potehi Puppet artist/maker in Gudo has the personal characteristics of a creator. The most visible characteristics are a fad, distinctive, sensitive, flexible, free, passionate and contemplative. They are making Puppet Potehi even though, on the other hand, as a job as well as a free time filler, fulfilling an artistic passion, exploring and creating. This passion for art encourages artists to have flexibility and sensitivity to keep up with the times and society so that their work gets more appreciation. The development carried out gives rise to a uniqueness that even though it follows the times, it still has freedom.

The difficulty is needed in creativity [2]. However, it is not only life's difficulties that affect creativity; other environmental influences, including enjoyable life experiences, can also affect creativity. Difficulties that foster creativity are the role of PTG (Posttraumatic Growth). PTG is a positive change after a challenging life experience that covers five domains, namely interpersonal relationships, perception of new possibilities in life, personal strength, spirituality, and appreciation of life. This PTG involves deliberate, reflective activities that are



the result of challenging life experiences. Increased creativity, in this case, is the existence of growth and expansion. According to Graham Wallas, creativity consists of 4 stages, namely preparation, incubation, the emergence of inspiration, and testing [21]. In the preparation stage, there is exploration and problem-solving thinking. The incubation stage is the stage of diversion of attention so that the subconscious/preconscious takes over and solves the problem. The emergence of inspiration is the stage where in the midst of this self-transfer, an idea emerges. Then the last stage is testing and refining ideas which in the process can return to the previous stage. This stage of the creative process is closer to western culture, which links the creative process to rational thinking through continuous experimentation. However, in eastern culture, the creative process is more likely to be mediative (reflections). Deliberate contemplation of challenging life experiences/experiences of difficulties in life can enhance creativity. Contemplating itself is related to the vision, which allows the emergence of the depth of thought and encourages someone always to create greater creations. This vision has an important contribution to the development of human culture. The driver of this vision is the creative energy in which there is self-discipline, dedication, enthusiasm, perseverance, tenacity and abundant energy, which is commonly called a call to a mission or sacred task [22]. That is what causes a person to stand in a "chaos" situation, which others cannot stand; he actually feels challenged to understand the difficulties and challenges to create a solution or integration.

The difficulties of life experienced by the Potehi Puppet artists in Gudo, such as those experienced by Toni and Sony, have motivated them both to become contemplative individuals who have visions so that they feel called upon to preserve this art, even in a state of chaos (without financial support and comfort). In addition, his family background as an artist of Potehi also strengthens his vision and calling in life. However, it is not only a difficult life experience and family background, but also other life experiences such as being born into an artistic family close to Potehi so that they have loved Potehi since childhood and found joy with Potehi. Having vision, fun to keep trying, sensitivity and flexibility are personal characteristics of a person who produces creations. Family background and life experiences that generate creative energy and endurance encourage deepening and increasing creativity in every stage of the creative process. The author cannot write too much about Samsul's creative process because he only has a little artistic background in his family and does not actively create or create ideas in carving Potehi Puppet. He only follows what Toni directed. Therefore, it still shows a harmonious relationship, Samsul, who does not have a strong family background; although he associates with many musicians, and is more established in his past life, does not have much influence on his creative process in making Potehi Puppet. He was only influenced by the technique of making handicrafts by his neighbour, who is also his brother but did not develop his conceptual side and also lacked inner intimacy with Potehi Puppet. The background relationship with the creative process of the Potehi Puppet artist (creator) in Gudo is shown in Figure 1.



**Fig. 1.** The relationship between the background of the artist Potehi Puppet in Gudo and his creative process

#### 4. Conclusion

Potehi Puppet is one of the traditional cultural arts of the archipelago that is preserved in Gudo; Jombang is motivated by several artists who have similar life stories and backgrounds. Toni, the group leader of the Potehi Puppet artists in Gudo named Hok Ho An/Fu He An, has a team that performs and makes the Potehi Puppet. The author only limits writing about the three people involved in the making of the Potehi Puppet, namely Toni (conceiver, controller, who does the finishing), Sonny (paint, drafter) and Samsul (engraver). Toni and Sony have a strong artistic family background and have known Potehi Puppet from their father, who works as the puppeteer of Potehi, and both of them have lost their father. Both of them experienced economic difficulties when they were young (Sonny struggled in the economy until now). Toni and Sony have been required to be independent and responsible for themselves since they were teenagers. Both of them also have had a close relationship with the Potehi Puppet since childhood. Samsul, as an engraver, although he has association and talent in arts, crafts and music, does not have a strong artistic family background and is not very familiar with Potehi Puppet. Samsul only worked on the Potehi Puppet according to Toni's request, but he was able to think creatively on his own and technically make the Potehi Puppet with the available materials and tools. From the three makers of the Potehi Puppet, there is a strengthening of the relationship between life experience and background, especially family background to the creative process. Toni and Sony, who have had many difficult life experiences and were born into an artistic family who is close to Potehi, have a personal pleasure and love for Potehi. The difficulties of life also encourage them to have reflections, coupled with a family background which is an artist, Potehi becomes a reinforcement of that reflection into creative energy that has endurance so that it can grow and deepen creativity. Even Samsul, who does not have a strong artistic family background and is not familiar with Potehi Puppet, does not really affect his creative process in making Potehi Puppet, but his association with craftsmen and musicians affects his creativity in terms of the technique of making Potehi. Reflection, creative energy and endurance make artists -This Potehi Puppet artist persists in working on Potehi even though he can't make a lot of money.

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