

Utilizing Lurik Waste for Handicraft Home Industry to Improve Low Class Family Income

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Abstract. Culture is one of human civilization evidence that makes them live a cultured and a civilized life. Lurik is one of Javanese local wisdom of utilizing natural fabric material which is abundant around the environment. It is specially made and tailored into lurik for Javanese low-class society since the high-class society choose to wear batik to show their high class. This research shows how lurik, particularly its waste, is used as part of Javanese modern and traditional items in local and small business of handicraft home industry in Yogyakarta. In addition to the wise use of lurik waste, the home industry is employing housewives from low class family. Apart from the fact that their wages are lower than the average workers, which is affordable for the small business, employing housewives means helping them to earn additional income to improve their families' wealth. The data were collected by holding literature review of lurik's philosophy, observation of the business activities, and interview with the parties involved in the business. The result shows that Javanese local people understand well the philosophy of lurik and utilize it properly for the sake of their benefit, that is, their business and their workers' better life condition. **Keywords:** culture, lurik, Javanese local wisdom, handicraft, housewives, low-class family income

1 Research Background

As one of human civilization evidence, culture shows how human being live a cultured and a civilized life by adorning or worshipping their own creation named culture. The word culture come from a Latin word 'cultura' which means to cult or to worship. It means, human being create culture to be adorned by themselves and then considered themselves cultured afterward. Culture represents human being way of thinking and way of life. Culture can be self-created like Chinese people creating Chinese Year celebration, inherited from their ancestors like Japanese samurai inherit harakiri culture in the past, passed into their descendants like European or American people passed Valentine Day culture from the past into the present done by the youth, or even learnt from other society like people learning Korean K-Drama and K-Pop.

Indonesia has a unique and famous culture that is learnt by people around the world, both formally at educational institution and informally through art and culture events.

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Javanese culture, is created by, inherited from, and passed to Javanese people. It is then also being learnt by other people. Javanese culture is already being maintained by Javanese ethnic who belongs to Indonesian people as a bigger community than the Javanese ethnic who own the culture. The Javanese culture maintenance is executed by practicing and passing it into the next generation. Javanese as well as Indonesian people should understand that globalization might become a serious threat for their culture as it can switch, shift, and replace old and traditional culture item with new and modern one that puts the old one into history that is only exposed to Javanese people descendants in the form of manuscript at museum.

The emergence of the modern and the popular culture which was more preferred by the new generation than the old and the unpopular one may gradually replace their culture as it will be considered out of date. Javanese culture threat occurs when the number of Javanese people maintaining their culture were declining because of the negative attitude toward their own culture. Only small number of young generations speak the language, wear the clothing, consume the food and the beverage, follow the tradition, or think and live like their ancestors. This research shows how Javanese people, maintain Javanese culture by utilizing lurik, either the whole cloth or a piece of its waste, in handicraft home industry made by housewives coming from the low-class family to help them adding more income for their family.

2 Theoretical Background

As it has mentioned before that Javanese culture reflects Javanese people's principal of life which makes them live the way they live from the past until the present. To keep its long life, Javanese culture should adapt the recent situation so that it can be used in the future as Javanese people culture identity in their civilization. As Javanese culture can be shifted, substituted, extinct, or even dead, it must be maintained to avoid Javanese people attitude change toward their own culture, such as Javanese language, resulted from politic, economy, and social changes which reduces the value, usage, and respect toward the culture [1].

Related to Javanese language maintenance and shift, Pauwels [2] said that the threat on Javanese language is mild since the diglossic or the multilingual situations is not actually present in the speaking community. It is proven by the presence of Javanese communities who were still speaking their local language as their mother tongue in their daily activities although they are only using it in casual or informal situation with intimate hearers. It occurs since in formal situation they must use Bahasa Indonesia as Indonesian official language or English as international language.

The situation can be changed because of the globalization since information is free to be accessed in many languages and people around the world is connected by technology. In addition, when it comes to the social psychology of the minorities, like Javanese language as indigenous language, the inferior might feel reluctant to show their cultural identity like the local language and choose to use the more beneficial and 'high' language [2]. Thus, the threat becomes bigger than before as the pressure is also higher than usual.

Related to Javanese culture, the situation is similar with Javanese language vitality since there are also Javanese communities who are still maintaining their culture by wearing batik or lurik, both as clothing and accessories, although they are also wearing casual outfit. When Javanese language may only be used and maintained by Javanese minorities in particular number and area, Javanese clothing face different treatment from Javanese people as their owner. Batik is the most popular example of Javanese traditional cloth, clothing, and cloth making technique that goes international and worn not only by old people but also young generation in so many different styles. As a high-class society clothing, batik is adorned not only by Javanese people itself but also many people around the world that makes batik producers create different kinds of batik for different purposes to suit the customers need.

Meanwhile, the low-class society -who cannot afford batik- creates their own clothing utilizing abundant but affordable natural resources surround them. They create lurik, a typical striped traditional cloth and clothing made by woven developed in Yogyakarta and Surakarta. Lurik is an alternative for Javanese people from the low-class society to be cultured and civilized just like the above level. Lurik is then utilized for various purposes such as traditional clothing like the uniform of the palace traditional soldiers, inner layer of leather purse or wallet, patch work for ready to wear modern clothing, part of souvenir, or handicraft. It is used particularly in home industries who are utilizing lurik as part of their creation because it is abundant, affordable, and adjustable to be integrated in the handicraft.

3 Research Methodology

Still in pandemic Covid-19 situation in 2022 this research is executed in three main steps, that are, Library Research, virtual Observation, and virtual Interview along with virtual Questionnaire. A virtual field research is done by documenting how lurik is made in which the researcher took 2 (two) research objects, that are, Yogyakarta and Surakarta lurik, using Purposive Sampling Technique [3] to show their difference. The researcher also took 2 (two) research subjects, that are 2 (two) handicraft home industry owners using Purposive Sampling Technique [3] to see how they utilized lurik and how it is beneficial for their housewives' workers to add more income for their low-class family. To get a comprehensive conclusion, the researcher digs more information from the two business owners, added with 2 (two) female workers as informants by giving virtual Questionnaire and holding another virtual Interview [4] to see their Javanese background, how they maintain their culture, and why they are still maintaining their culture by keep using lurik in the business. The data were analysed using 7 (seven) cultural universalities of language [5] and Culture and Language Maintenance Theory [1, 6, 7] to know (1) how Javanese people maintain Javanese culture in the form of clothing and accessories, and (2) the reason why they still maintain it.

4 Finding and Discussion

4.1 Finding

Lurik is a kind of woven cloth with a particular striped and checked pattern in dark colour combined with bright coloured thread to make it aesthetic [8] The oldest lurik pattern, named *lurik pakan malang* was recorded in 851-822 Century in an inscription of Mataram Kingdom during its Hindu era [9]. Lurik along with its particular loom was also mentioned in literature and folktale from different part of Indonesia which is famous of its woven cloth such as Palembang, Bali, Tuban, Yogyakarta, and Surakarta. The complete explanation of lurik's history, philosophy, making process (weaving and dyeing), pattern kind and meaning, usage, as well as myth is presented by Safitri in her research [8].

From the virtual field research, the researchers chose 2 (two) kinds of lurik pattern commonly produce by Yogyakarta and Surakarta lurik artisans that were sold as cloth, tailored into traditional clothing, integrated in modern fashion, used as inner layer of leather purse or wallet, or utilized as part of handicraft. The researchers figure out how those lurik were produced and utilized. From the business owners, the researchers were able to know how they get, made, and sold their product as well as what is the benefit of lurik for their business compared to another cloth. In addition to the benefit of lurik for the business owners, the researchers also found out the benefit of lurik for the workers who are mostly housewives trying to get additional weekly income to improve their low-class family income. Therefore,

this business is supporting Indonesian economic growth and development by improving the life of low-class family. The following framework shows how the researcher do this research.

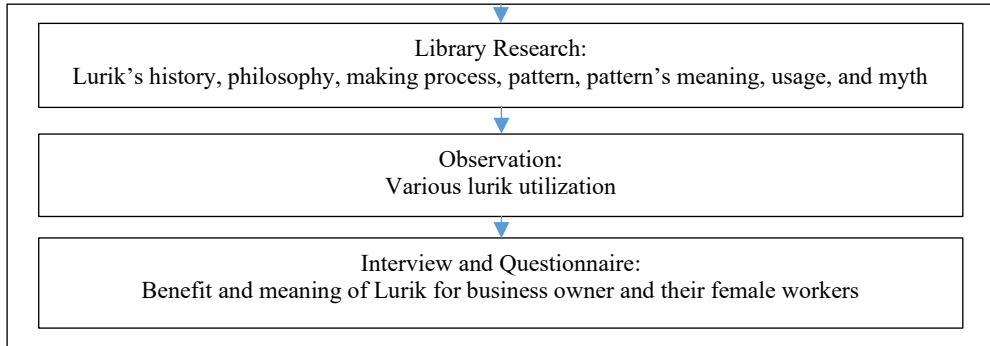


Figure 1. Research Framework

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Lurik

According to Indonesian National Encyclopaedia (1997), lurik is a particular cloth from Central Java, which is made of thread woven with stripped or checked motives in dark colour interspersed with colourful threads. The word 'lurik' comes from a Javanese root 'rik' which means lines or ditch. It means that the cloth or the clothing made of lurik resembles fence which represents protection from the outside danger for people who are wearing it.

There are three main kinds or types of lurik motifs or patterns, particularly made by Yogyakarta and Surakarta lurik artisan. The first one is 'lajuran' in which the stripes run in the direction of the warp. The second one is 'pakan malang' where the stripes run in the direction of the weft. The third one is 'cacahan' or 'kotak-kotak' which is formed by the intersection of 'lajuran' and 'pakan malang'. Figure 2 shows those three lurik patterns.

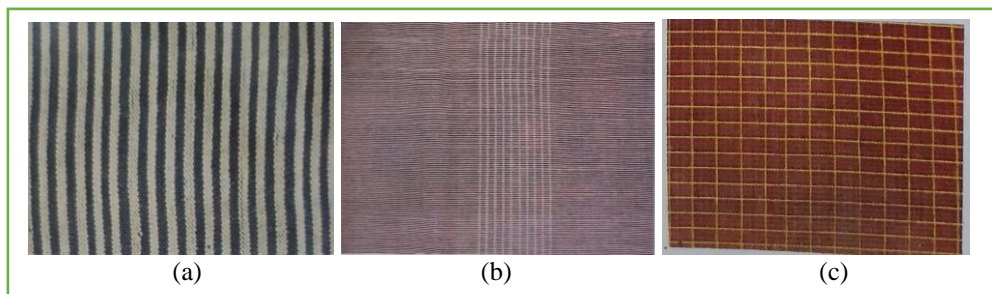


Figure 2. Lajuran (a), Pakan Malang (b), and Cacahan (c) [9]

Lajuran is lurik pattern in which the stripes run in the direction of the warp, while *Pakan Malang* is lurik pattern in which the stripes run in the direction of the weft. Meanwhile, the unique *Cacahan* or *Kotak-Kotak* is lurik pattern which is formed by the intersection of *Lajuran* and *Pakan Malang* resulted in checked pattern. Up to now, there are so many versions, variations, and colors of those three lurik patterns. Nonetheless, *Lajuran* becomes the most preferred patterns by many lurik users as it has traditional and classic style which represents the humble Javanese people.

4.2.2 Lurik Utilization for Business

In the past, lurik is particularly made for the low-class society as an alternative cloth and clothing from batik which is commonly used and worn by the high-class society as it has higher value and more difficult process to make than lurik. Nowadays, lurik is utilized by Javanese people of different society class for different purpose. The traditional lurik surjan is still worn by Yogyakarta palace soldiers and servants (*abdi dalem*) in traditional ceremony. This traditional outfit is also worn by horse carriages and sellers along Malioboro street as well as restaurants and hotels staff. We can also find old and young people wearing lurik on street, both the traditional and the modern ones. Yogyakarta is the best place to visit if you want to see how lurik is used and worn.

The modern usage of lurik is marked by the integration of lurik in fashion like what Lenny Agustin did by utilizing lurik in some of her modern and funky kebaya designs to look more aesthetic as it has a traditional touch representing Indonesia although it belongs to a ready to wear stylish outfit. To integrate lurik in the fashion, lurik is utilized by taking a whole piece of the cloth, cutting some of it, and integrating it into the kebaya, the skirt, or the pants to make it as a whole piece of 'funky kebaya' outfit. The lurik waste is then bought by local and small home industries as raw material for their products. Therefore, the benefit of lurik keeps on going from the producers, consumers, and end users.

The end user has a wiser use of lurik by utilizing its waste from the first-hand consumers in accessories, merchandise, souvenir, or handicraft such as the inner layer of purse or wallet, slippers, pencil case, or keychain in local and small home industries. One of best examples of the utilization of lurik waste is done by Anantio Leather Bag that is continuously use lurik as the inner layer of its high quality, but affordable, leather bag produced in Bantul, Yogyakarta. To utilize lurik in the accessories, lurik is used by purposively selecting a particular pattern and colour that suits the leather bag style and colour so that when the customers open the inside part of the bag, they will see an inner layer lurik that is matched with the bag colour. The following Figure 3 shows the use of lurik in fashion as part of clothing and accessories.

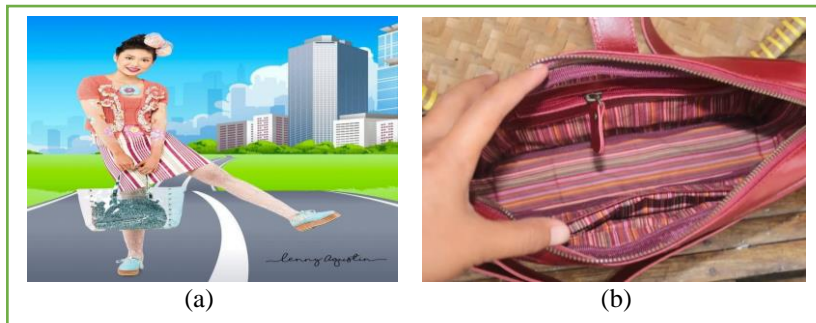


Figure 3. Funky Kebaya by Lenny Agustin (a) and Anantio Leather Bag (b)

According to the business owners, as woven cloth, both being weaved by machine and by manual loom, lurik is more durable than batik. Therefore, it is suitable to be used as part of things that will be used daily as heavy-duty item as its thread has already been tightly weaved so that it will not be easily torn. In addition to its durability, lurik that is commonly used in industry is more affordable than batik that is usually used in fashion like written (*tulis*), stamped (*cap*), or printed (*cetak*) batik. Even though producers can have affordable batik for their industry such as printed batik, its durability is lower than the common lurik. Moreover, lurik patterns is limited and classic. It made the product they produce becomes special as it has a particular and an exclusive signature of traditional striped pattern.

4.2.3 Lurik Meaning for Business Owner and Their Female Workers

For the business owner, lurik is the best alternative of utilizing less preferred item with good quality and affordable price but extra ordinary and exclusive style. Both the lurik cloth or its waste can be utilized well in high fashion like Funky Kebaya, valuable accessories like Anantio Leather Bag, or even cheap handicraft as merchandise or souvenir sold by Malioboro street vendors for less than ten thousand rupiah. These businesses help lurik producers or artisans maintain and develop their workshop so that lurik will be preserved and used by the future Javanese generation.

In addition to the lurik benefit for business owners who utilize lurik and lurik artisans who sell their products, the business utilizing lurik helps so female workers who are mostly housewives coming from low-class family as they are trying to add more weekly income for their family by working part-time in these home industries. These pink-collar workers were specially recruited by the business owners not only because of their lower wages compared to the common workers but also because of their best working attitude. Their neatness in compiling the patchwork for difficult design made by the designer made them selected to tailor the 'out of the day' outfit. Their thoroughness in selecting and putting the inner layer of the leather bag which suits the model and the colour of the bag, made their employers fond of their hard work.

For these labours, the business utilizing lurik is meaningful for their life as it gives them an opportunity to get additional income -from the commonly weekly paid part time job- for their family who are mostly in a low economic status. It can be said that utilizing lurik in fashion and accessories business, both big or small industries like what Lenny Agustin and Anantio did, creates sustainable economic development for lurik producers, business owner, and workers who are mostly housewives from low-class economy family. In addition to those benefit, the wise use of lurik waste in the industry also helps to save the environment from bulk of industrial waste that is problematic to be solved.

5 Conclusion

From the data analysis on the finding and the discussion, the researcher found out that lurik is a traditional Javanese clothing specially made by and for the low to the middle-class society in Java, although the upper level also wears some kinds of lurik for their outfit. The researcher also found out that lurik is a good product to be used in business, such as fashion and accessories industry for its abundant stock and affordable price but long-life durability and various colour or patterns.

By supporting the use of lurik in tourism industry since the palace soldiers and servants are wearing lurik in traditional event attracting tourist and lurik becomes one of many popular icons of Yogyakarta City, the local government had already made their best effort to maintain part of Javanese culture by preserving lurik as traditional clothing.

The whole effort shows us all that if the Javanese people as the culture owners keep their culture practice, it will not be easily shifted, replaced, endangered, extinct, or dead. It will be maintained and utilized not only by the owner but also by people around the world. This way, the culture becomes the nation wealth that can be spread throughout the world. Therefore, the owner of the culture can be proud of the culture item, that is, lurik, as their culture identity.

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