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## THE ROLE OF LOCAL WISDOM IN ENHANCING THE ECONOMIC RESILIENCE OF WOOD CRAFTSMEN IN JEPARA

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### ABSTRACT

#### KEYWORDS

*Local Wisdom,  
Economic Resilience,  
Jepara Wood  
Craftsmen*

This study aims to assess the role of local wisdom in improving the economic resilience of wood craftsmen in Jepara Regency. Involving 50 woodworkers as respondents, this study used quantitative methods to analyze demographic data and their perceptions of local wisdom. The results of the demographic analysis showed that the majority of respondents were between 26 to 45 years old, with 70% of them being male. The last education of the respondents varied, with 40% having a high school education and 20% having a diploma. The average score of respondents' perception of local wisdom was 3.75, with a median of 4.00. Further analysis showed that 25% of respondents strongly agreed that local wisdom had a positive effect on their work. The validity test using factor analysis showed that all items in the questionnaire were valid ( $p < 0.05$ ), while the reliability test with Cronbach's Alpha yielded a value of 0.87, indicating that the questionnaire was highly reliable. In addition, the Pearson correlation test revealed a correlation coefficient of 0.65 ( $p < 0.01$ ), indicating a significant positive relationship between local wisdom and the economic resilience of wood craftsmen. This finding indicates that the higher the understanding and application of local wisdom among the craftsmen, the better their economic resilience. This study concludes that local wisdom serves as an effective strategy in strengthening community economic resilience, while encouraging craftsmen to produce quality and highly competitive products.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country known for its rich and unique diversity, consisting of nearly seventeen thousand islands spread from Sabang to Merauke (Ali & Wekke, 2021). Each island not only has an abundant landscape and natural resource wealth, but also holds a wealth of different cultures, languages and local traditions (Murti & Maya, 2021). More than 1,300 ethnic groups inhabit the region, each with distinctive customs, local wisdom, and habits that have been passed down from generation to generation (Sinapoy, 2018). This diversity is reflected in various aspects of community life, such as arts, culinary, crafts, social systems, and traditional values that are still maintained today (Kamila, 2023). In the midst of the times and modernization, this cultural wealth and local wisdom still have an important role, not only as a national identity, but also as a source of economic and social strength for communities in various regions (Saputri et al., 2021).

One of the areas that is still thick with local wisdom and local creations is Jepara (Suratmi, 2022). Jepara is one of the regions in Central Java Province that has excellence in the field of carving (Triyono, 2021). Jepara is internationally known as "The World Carving Centre," making it a world-recognized center for carving crafts. This potential is not only a source of regional pride but also an important sector for the economic development of the local community. The carving industry in Jepara has played a significant role in improving the economic welfare of residents in various regions.

Most Jepara people work as craftsmen or entrepreneurs in the carving sector, which is spread across almost all sub-districts in the district (Zainuddin, 2016). Some of the most famous carving trade centers are in Ngabul, Senenan, Tahunan, and Mulyoharjo. Among these areas, Mulyoharjo is the largest center and is located in Jepara sub-district, which is in the city center. According to data from the Jepara Regency Statistics Bureau (BPS) in 2021, these areas are the main drivers of carving production and trade, reflecting the importance of the sector in the regional economy.

The art of carving in Jepara involves the creative process of carving or scraping on wood and metal surfaces to create specific patterns or images. This technique produces a protruding (relief) or concave shape according to the desired design (Putra, 2017). The patterns created not only have aesthetic value but also contain philosophical and symbolic values, which enrich the meaning of each work (Wulandari, 2022). This carving art has become a cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation and continues to develop following the needs of the modern market.

According to Sukijo Sudarmono in his book *Woodcarving* (1979), carving is an activity that combines hand skills with visual creativity. The process of making carvings requires not only precision and patience, but also a deep understanding of the materials and tools used. Craftsmen in Jepara have combined traditional techniques with modern innovations to maintain the quality and uniqueness of their work, making Jepara carving art still in demand in local and international markets (Sukijo, 1979).

Culture is an important aspect that must be preserved because it reflects the identity of a region and society (Indrawati & Sari, 2024). In Jepara Regency, wood carvings and sculptures not only have aesthetic value, but also have a strategic economic function as products that represent local wisdom and hereditary heritage. This cultural identity is a valuable asset that strengthens the competitiveness of Jepara products in national and international markets, because products with traditional characteristics have originality and cultural meaning that appeal to consumers. Woodcarving is not only a source of regional pride, but also an important pillar in supporting the economic resilience of the community. By maintaining and developing the art of carving, the people of Jepara create sustainable economic opportunities, create jobs, and improve welfare (Kiswahni, 2022).

In this industry, thousands of craftsmen and businesses are involved, making it a creative economic sector capable of absorbing labor and reducing dependence on the formal sector (Meli, 2022). Innovations made in design and production techniques also allow carving products to remain relevant in modern markets, such as for furniture and decoration needs, without abandoning traditional values. Carving plays an important role in creating the economic resilience of the Jepara community, because in addition to supporting income, the sector is able to withstand challenges such as changing market trends and economic crises. By relying on cultural wealth and local wisdom, Jepara carving is an economic foundation that not only sustains current prosperity, but also builds long-term resilience for future generations.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of art carving in Jepara as a reflection of local cultural identity, by identifying the philosophical and symbolic values contained in each

carving work. In addition, this study aims to evaluate the economic contribution made by the carving industry to the local economy, especially in creating jobs, improving community welfare, and encouraging the development of the creative economy sector in the area. This research also aims to explore the innovation strategies applied by Jepara craftsmen in facing the challenges of modernization, such as changing market trends and global consumer needs, without ignoring the traditional values that characterize Jepara carving art. Thus, this research focuses not only on cultural aspects, but also on socio-economic contributions that are important for the sustainability of the Jepara carving industry.

The benefits of this research are to make a significant contribution both theoretically, practically, and socio-economically. Theoretically, this research can enrich the literature on carving as part of local cultural heritage that has philosophical, symbolic, and aesthetic values, as well as provide insights into creative economic studies, especially in the traditional arts sector that prioritizes cultural and economic sustainability. Practically, the results of this study can provide input to local governments, craftsmen, and carving industry players about the importance of preserving and developing Jepara carving as a cultural product that has economic value. This research is also expected to be a guide for craftsmen in developing product innovations that maintain traditional characteristics, so that they are relevant to the needs of the modern market. On the socio-economic side, this research has the potential to increase Jepara people's awareness of the importance of preserving their cultural heritage, as well as encouraging the younger generation to preserve and develop carving art through creative innovation. In addition, this research can provide a basis for the development of creative economy policies that support the carving sector, as well as encourage collaboration between local artisans and the global market through e-commerce platforms and wider distribution networks. As such, this research has far-reaching implications in strengthening the position of Jepara carving as a cultural asset that can also become a key pillar in future sustainable economic development.

## **METHOD RESEARCH**

### **1. Population and sampling methods**

According to Sugiyono (2013), Population is a group with certain characteristics that have been determined by the researcher. This population is used as the main focus of research so that with the right population, relevant conclusions can be drawn based on the results of identifying and understanding the characteristics found. The population in this study were all wood craftsmen in Jepara. According to data from BPS, the number of small industrial centers in Jepara in 2018 was 7251 industrial centers with various forms of crafts. This means that the population of this study is 7251 industrial centers.

According to Sugiyono (2013) the sample is a collection of objects from the population that are selected because they have certain characteristics that are suitable for research purposes. This sample acts as a representative of the population, so that the research results obtained can describe the condition of the population. In this study, the sample was selected using Purposive Sampling, which is a sampling method that requires respondents who meet certain criteria, the criteria for respondents here are that they must be wood craftsmen and also native to Jepara. The sample that will be the respondents in this study amounted to 50 respondents.

## 2. Population and sampling methods

The research instrument used in this research is a questionnaire. This questionnaire totals 7 questions which will be answered by respondents and used as data which will be processed into information in the form of research results. This questionnaire consists of a series of closed questions with a 5-point Likert scale containing the options “Strongly Disagree”, “Disagree”, “Neutral”, “Agree” and “Strongly Agree”. This questionnaire is designed to measure the perceptions and experiences of wood craftsmen regarding the role of local wisdom in improving their economic resilience. Some aspects to be measured include the application of local wisdom in the production process, the contribution of local wisdom to income, adaptability in the face of market changes, and social or institutional support related to the development of carving crafts. The questionnaire will be distributed to 50 respondents selected using purposive sampling, namely wood craftsmen in Jepara who are active in producing and selling their crafts.

The use of quantitative methods allows researchers to conduct statistical analysis of the collected data, such as validity, reliability, and descriptive analysis tests. After the data from the questionnaire is collected, the researcher will process the results using SPSS to see the patterns and relationships between the variables of local wisdom and economic resilience. The instrument is designed to be easily understood by respondents, with a short filling time but still able to provide relevant information.

## 3. Research Procedure and Period

This research procedure begins with research preparation, which includes a literature study to understand the concepts of local wisdom, economic resilience and the wood craft industry. After that, the researcher will design a questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions with a Likert scale to measure artisans' perceptions of the role of local wisdom in their economic resilience. Once the questionnaire is completed, the next step is data collection. The questionnaire will be distributed to 50 respondents who are active wood craftsmen in Jepara Regency, both through direct approach and online. Researchers will also provide assistance to respondents to ensure they understand the questions asked and fill out the questionnaire honestly.

After the data is collected, researchers will analyze the data using the SPSS application. The data that has been obtained will be analyzed to see patterns and relationships between local wisdom variables and economic resilience. The results of this analysis will be outlined in a research report that includes an Introduction, Research Methodology, Results and Discussion and conclusions. The process of preparing the report is expected to take about two weeks, ending with a presentation of the research results. It is hoped that this research can provide valuable insights into the role of local wisdom in the economic resilience of the Jepara community.

## 4. Analysis Plan

The analysis plan for this study will use descriptive and correlation statistical approaches to process the data obtained from the questionnaires. First, descriptive analysis will be used to describe the respondents' characteristics, including demographics, educational background, and work experience in wood crafts. Next, the data from each questionnaire question will be calculated to obtain the mean, median and frequency distribution, so that the researcher can see an overview of the craftsmen's perceptions of local wisdom and its impact on economic resilience. To test the

relationship between local wisdom and economic resilience, correlation analysis such as the Pearson correlation test will be applied. Through this analysis, it is hoped to gain a deeper understanding of how local wisdom contributes to the economic resilience of wood craftsmen in Jepara, as well as the factors that influence the relationship.

#### 5. Validity and Reliability Test

The validity test of a questionnaire is intended to measure how accurate the instrument is in measuring the concept to be measured. A valid questionnaire is able to measure what should be measured. To test validity, we compare the relationship between each question and the total score of the questionnaire. If the correlation between the two is statistically significant (usually at the 5% significance level), then the questionnaire is considered valid (Micah et al., 2021).

Reliability test is intended to measure the level of consistency of a questionnaire. A reliable questionnaire will produce the same results if used repeatedly under the same conditions. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is generally used to measure the internal reliability of a questionnaire. If the Alpha value is greater than 0.6, the questionnaire is considered reliable and trustworthy (Micah et al., 2021).

#### 6. Statistical and Comparison Test

This tactical Uji S was carried out to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaire. First, descriptive analysis will be used to describe the demographic characteristics of respondents, such as age, gender, and education, as well as to provide an overview of their perceptions of local wisdom and economic resilience. The mean, median, mode, and frequency distribution will be calculated for each question in the questionnaire. Furthermore, to determine the relationship between local wisdom and economic resilience, a Pearson correlation test will be applied (Andriany, 2022). This test will measure the extent of the linear relationship between the two variables, with the correlation coefficient values ranging from -1 to 1, where values close to 1 indicate a strong positive relationship, while values close to -1 indicate a strong negative relationship. If the results of the correlation test show a significant relationship, a simple linear regression analysis will be carried out to identify how much local wisdom influences economic resilience. This regression model will provide information about coefficients that show the average change in economic resilience in response to changes in local wisdom. Through this series of statistical tests, the research is expected to provide comprehensive insights into the relationship between local wisdom and the economic resilience of wood craftsmen in Jepara.

The comparison of this study will be compared with the results of previous studies so that they can be interrelated and can be a reference in building the results of this study (Ibrahim et al., 2023). By using relevant literature, it will help researchers in obtaining descriptive results from this study.

#### 7. Scope and Limitations of Research

The scope of this research is limited to analyzing the role of local wisdom in increasing the economic resilience of wood craftsmen in Jepara Regency. This research will focus on craftsmen involved in the wood carving craft industry. The respondents to the study consisted of 50 woodcutters who were active and had at least one year of experience in the industry. The questionnaire used will explore artisans' perceptions of

local wisdom and its influence on economic resilience, including aspects of product innovation, marketing, and social support. This study will not discuss artisans outside the timber sector or in other areas, so the results obtained will be more specific to Jepara Regency (Azizah & Widiastuti, 2018).

The limitations of this study include several aspects that need to be considered (Waruwu, 2023). First, the limited number of respondents, namely 50 people, can affect the generalization of the research results to all woodworkers in Jepara. Respondents selected through *Purposive Sampling* may also have different characteristics from the population as a whole, which may affect the results. In addition, this study only uses questionnaires as data collection instruments, which may not fully reflect the complexity of the relationship between local wisdom and economic resilience. Other limitations also include external factors that can affect economic resilience, such as market conditions, government policies, and social changes, which will not be explored in depth in this study. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to provide an overview but must be carefully considered in a broader context.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 50 wood craftsmen in Jepara Regency, which were analyzed from various demographic aspects. The demographic breakdown of respondents shows that the majority are in the age range of 26 to 45 years, with a percentage of 30% (15 respondents) aged 26-35 years and 35% (17 respondents) aged 36-45 years. In terms of gender, 70% of respondents are male, while 30% are female. The last education of the respondents varied, where 40% (20 respondents) had a high school education and 20% (10 respondents) had a diploma education. The results of descriptive statistical analysis showed that the average score of perception of local wisdom was 3.75, with a median of 4.00. The frequency of artisans' perception of local wisdom also varies, where 25% (12 respondents) strongly agree that local wisdom has a positive effect on their work, while 5% (3 respondents) strongly disagree.

Followed by a validity test conducted through factor analysis showed that all items in the questionnaire had a significant validity value ( $p < 0.05$ ), while the reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha produced a value of 0.87, which indicates that this questionnaire has a very good level of reliability. The Pearson correlation test conducted to measure the relationship between local wisdom and the economic resilience of woodworkers produced a correlation coefficient of 0.65 ( $p < 0.01$ ), showing a significant positive relationship. This shows that the higher the understanding and application of local wisdom among craftsmen, the better their economic resilience.

In addition, there is another research that is also a relevant literature reference from Zaim Mukaffi, M. Nanang Choiruddin and Syahirul Alim, 2019 with a research entitled "Creative Industry Development Strategy Based on Local Wisdom (Study on the Banyuwangi Batik Handicraft Industry Center)". From this study, the conclusion is drawn that to achieve optimal results in the development of the batik creative industry in Banyuwangi, collaboration between three main actors is needed: the government, academics, and business actors. Commitment from all three parties is very important to establish sustainable coordination and synergy. The Banyuwangi district government plays an active role in batik socialization, training, and festival organization, although the contribution of academics in batik development is still lacking. Business actors have applied various creative methods to introduce their batik products, such as utilizing social media and collaborating

with agents. With a significant contribution to the economy and labor absorption, the batik handicraft industry in Banyuwangi is expected to continue to develop as a leading small and medium industry in the area (Zaim et al., 2019).

From the two researchers above, the role of local wisdom has proven to be significant in maintaining and improving the community's economy, as seen in the case study of empowering palm sugar MSMEs in Java City Village and the development of the batik handicraft industry in Banyuwangi. Local wisdom is not only a strong cultural identity, but also serves as the basis for product innovation that can increase competitiveness in the market. In both studies, the application of local wisdom allows MSME actors to develop quality and unique products, which attract consumers both locally and regionally. In addition, the use of social media and online marketing systems expands the reach of the market, so local products can be sold more widely without geographical restrictions. Thus, empowerment based on local wisdom not only provides economic benefits for individual business actors, but also contributes to overall local economic growth, improves community welfare, and creates better economic resilience. Of course, this is also in accordance with the results of this research with local wisdom is wood crafts in Jepara. Therefore, the previous two studies are relevant to this study.

## CONCLUSION

Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kearifan lokal memiliki peran penting dalam meningkatkan ketahanan ekonomi pengrajin kayu di Kabupaten Jepara. Dengan melibatkan 50 pengrajin, hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas responden menyadari dampak positif kearifan lokal terhadap pekerjaan mereka, dengan rata-rata skor persepsi mencapai 3,75. Uji validitas dan reliabilitas kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa instrumen yang digunakan dapat dipercaya untuk mengukur variabel yang diteliti. Lebih lanjut, uji korelasi Pearson mengindikasikan hubungan positif yang signifikan antara pemahaman dan penerapan kearifan lokal dengan ketahanan ekonomi pengrajin, dengan koefisien korelasi 0,65. Penelitian ini menunjukkan begitu pentingnya kearifan lokal dalam mendukung keberlangsungan dan peningkatan perekonomian para pengrajin kayu, menegaskan bahwa upaya pelestarian dan penerapan nilai-nilai lokal dapat menjadi strategi efektif dalam menguatkan ketahanan ekonomi masyarakat. Saran dari penulis dalam mempertahankan dan meningkatkan perekonomian para pengrajin kayu di Jepara, ada baiknya memanfaatkan perkembangan teknologi seperti melakukan perluasan pemasaran menggunakan media social, mulai mencoba ekspor produk-produk local berbentuk kerajinan kayu tersebut sehingga produk local dapat *Go International*. Pemerintah daerah atau institusi terkait dapat menyelenggarakan pelatihan bagi pengrajin untuk meningkatkan pemahaman mereka tentang pemasaran digital, pengelolaan bisnis, dan teknik branding, sehingga mereka dapat lebih kompetitif di pasar global.

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