



FASHION TRANSFORMATION FROM TRADITION TO MODERNITY: THE EVOLUTION OF AESTHETICS IN THE CLOTHING CULTURE OF KUDUS, CENTRAL JAVA

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Abstract

Kudus, Central Java, is a region rich in tradition and culture. The transformation of fashion in Kudus reflects the aesthetic shift in society from traditional to modern styles. Traditional clothing, such as kebaya and batik, initially symbolized cultural identity. However, with the influence of globalization and technological advancements, Kudus's fashion has undergone significant changes. During the colonial era, the kebaya experienced notable modifications, becoming more luxurious and sophisticated. Today, Kudus has emerged as a rapidly growing fashion hub, with numerous clothing stores and boutiques offering the latest products. This study employs a qualitative approach and phenomenological method to explore the subjective experiences of Kudus residents regarding fashion modernization. The data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model. The findings indicate that despite foreign cultural influences, the people of Kudus strive to preserve traditional values while adapting to modern fashion trends. For instance, kebaya and batik now feature simpler and more contemporary designs, utilizing production technology and being marketed online and offline. This transformation strengthens local cultural identity and enhances its global appeal. The study highlights the importance of balancing tradition preservation with adaptation to contemporary developments to ensure cultural sustainability in the modern era. This article is essential for understanding the dynamics of fashion in a society that seeks to harmonize tradition with modernity and enriches the discourse on cultural identity in the contemporary age.

Keywords: *fashion, aesthetics, evolution, modernization, kebaya, batik, Kudus culture, design innovation.*

INTRODUCTION

Clothing initially served as a biological necessity for humans, but it has now evolved into a part of lifestyle. Besides functioning to protect the body, clothing is also used to self-express. Fashion trends change every year. In Indonesia, fashion trends were initially influenced by European and Asian cultures, including the recent significant influence of Korean fashion. The history of Indonesian fashion shows rapid development, with Western styles serving as the main inspiration in the early stages, both in terms of materials and designs (Alhadi & Oktaviani, 2020). Modernization has led to social changes, including in the way people dress. Modernization is the process of change in society, where people begin to update themselves to adopt the characteristics of modern society (Fatihatur Rohmah & Legowo, 2022). Modernization in clothing not only changes styles but also influences society's views on identity and culture. The use of traditional clothing for specific events has decreased, replaced by more practical modern attire. As a result, younger generations are more inclined to follow global trends without understanding the cultural significance behind traditional garments. Culture evolves within a society as a form of behaviour that shapes habits. From these habits, the values and norms of a society are formed through culture, which must be taught in personality development. Personality development does not only occur through formal or informal education but can be achieved through any path that allows an individual to receive a good education (Iskhaq et al., 2021).

Kudus is a city that explicitly declares itself as an industrial city based on religiosity and is known for its slogan, *Gusjigang* (Good, Recite the Quran, and Trade) (Ihsan, 2018). This presents an excellent opportunity for the people of Kudus to become familiar with modern fashion trends through its industries. One

example is the clothing trends from other countries that are widely shared on social media and are quickly adopted by the Javanese community. Modernization in traditional clothing has a variety of impacts. It can gradually cause traditional culture to be replaced by modern culture. However, the impact is not entirely negative, as modernization also positively affects the fashion styles of Javanese youth. Modern clothing influenced by foreign cultures may be seen as more prestigious or stylish because it reflects a higher social status or is associated with global trends. Traditional clothing, on the other hand, can also be chosen for symbolic reasons, such as supporting local cultural heritage or expressing a more authentic lifestyle (Graha et al., 2024). Clothing serves as a national and cultural identity for its wearer. It reflects a person's cultural affiliation, known as a cultural display. The clothing showcases outward appearance and provides insight into the wearer's sense of self (Trismaya, 2019). Therefore, traditional clothing becomes a distinctive cultural symbol of a region, representing the identity of the wearer's place of origin. Throughout its history, the kebaya was worn by Javanese women as daily attire and by Dutch women and Eurasians living in Java. After the fall of the New Order, marked by the Reformasi period, the shape and function of the kebaya transformed. This change coincided with the rise of designers who embraced modern kebaya themes.

Additionally, there was a trend toward making kebaya designs more closed and modest, in line with the growing influence of Islamic teachings. An example is the "kutu baru" kebaya model, which features a higher front, thus covering the cleavage, and the emergence of the Muslim kebaya style that combines the kebaya with a headscarf covering the hair, neck, and chest (Sonny, 2020). This means that the progression of modern times has changed the clothing practices of the Javanese community, emphasizing

aesthetics and modesty. Traditional clothing is a cultural heritage that needs to be preserved, but the advancement of time and modernization have caused traditional attire to fall behind.

One of the social media platforms that brings about trend changes is TikTok. TikTok is an app that strongly supports lifestyle changes closely related to the evolution of time and technology. TikTok encourages activities that influence an individual's lifestyle on social media and real life. This has a significant impact on social media, particularly Instagram, in the form of posts that serve as a benchmark for users to showcase their lifestyles, including fashion, food, shopping, and activities that support their way of life (Firdaus et al., 2023).

Modernization in clothing refers to the shift from traditional dressing styles to more modern forms in line with time. The crop top kebaya trend has recently emerged and is becoming popular on social media. Kementerian Kebudayaan, Riset, (2024), modern or modified kebayas still should not change their size. A traditional kebaya fits the body properly. In this case, the kebaya can be modified at the bottom by either widening or gathering it, as long as it remains proportionate to the body. However, the modern kebaya or the crop top kebaya inspired by Korea clearly violates traditional rules, and this can be detrimental to Indonesian culture, especially to the Javanese community. Although it is just a trend, people should not simply follow this style. The Korean-inspired crop top kebaya, which is mini-sized and only reaches above the waist, with pastel colours, adds an aesthetic value but contradicts the traditional rules of kebaya in Indonesia. Although many studies have discussed the impact of modernization on culture, there is still a lack of understanding regarding how Javanese dressing traditions can adapt to changes without losing their original identity. Some researchers, such as Alhadi and Oktaviani (2020), Have shown that

modernization often erodes local cultures, but there has been little research on how this adaptation can occur harmoniously. In the context of Javanese society, the theory of fashion transformation from tradition to modernity refers to the aesthetic and cultural value changes in dressing as modernization progresses. Therefore, further research is needed to link the modernization theory with clothing practices among the younger generation.

Although some studies have discussed changes in clothing trends in Indonesia, few studies examine the impact of modernization on traditional clothing in Java. Modern clothing trends threaten the existence of traditional attire, but there has been little exploration of how society can respond to these trends constructively (Fatihatur Rohmah & Legowo, 2022). Clothing serves as a symbol of cultural identity. However, there has been no in-depth research on how the younger Javanese generation interprets and responds to their cultural identity amidst modernization (Trismaya, 2019).

This article explores the impact of modernization on dressing traditions among the younger Javanese generation, particularly in Kudus. Research on the transformation of fashion from tradition to modernity within the Kudus community is important to understand the evolution of aesthetics and cultural dynamics in clothing. By understanding how the people of Kudus adapt to fashion changes, we can observe how cultural identity can still be preserved amidst globalization. This research also explores how the people of Kudus interpret cultural values through fashion and seek ways to preserve traditional clothing in an increasingly complex and diverse modern era.

METHOD

The approach applied in this research is qualitative. Qualitative research produces findings that cannot be obtained through statistical procedures or other quantitative methods (Murdiyanto, 2020).

Qualitative research is descriptive and typically uses analysis with an inductive approach. Qualitative research offers various approaches, allowing researchers to choose the one that best fits the studied subject (Yusanto, 2020). Data must be analyzed carefully to achieve optimal results. Qualitative research emphasizes understanding social issues based on realistic conditions or natural environments that are holistic, complex, and in-depth (Malahati et al., 2023).

The method used in this research is the phenomenological method. Phenomenology is a scientific study that examines and investigates an event experienced by an individual, a group of individuals, or a group of living beings (Nasir et al., 2023). The phenomenological approach is suitable for this research, as it is used to explore and understand the subjective experiences and meanings that individuals assign to a particular phenomenon. In examining changes in clothing styles, the phenomenological approach allows the researcher to explore perceptions, values, and the reasons behind clothing style choices in each period. By understanding firsthand experiences and perspectives from different generations, this research can reveal how culture, technology, and society influence the evolution of clothing styles and the symbolic meanings attached to fashion in each era.

Procedure/Flow of the Phenomenological Method Approach as shown in Figure 1:

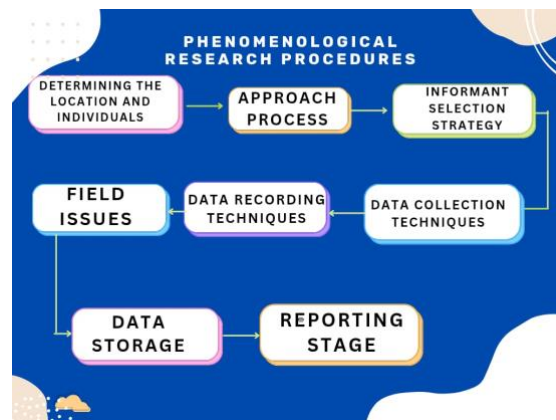


Figure 1: Flowchart of Phenomenological Research
(Source: Rijal Fiqrul Aziz, 2024)

The Flowchart of the Phenomenological Research Procedure Includes: (1) Determining the Location and Individuals; (2) Approach Process; (3) Informant Selection Strategy; (4) Data Collection Techniques; (5) Data Recording Techniques; (6) Field Issues; (7) Data Storage; and (8) Reporting Stage.

This qualitative research using the phenomenological method requires a procedure for determining the location and individuals. The research is conducted with kebaya and batik sellers in Pasar Kliwon. The selection of this qualitative approach involves an informant strategy. The research procedure includes interviewing the informants with appropriate and skilful questions. The data collection techniques include observation, interviews, documentation, and audiovisual material gathering. Data recording is essential to avoid data loss, so maintaining eye contact and concluding with a note of gratitude to the informants is essential. Field issue collection involves recording significant events to strengthen arguments. Data is collected before searching for new locations or individuals for further data gathering. Researchers should take note of important aspects, such as recording interviews using high-quality audio devices and constantly archiving data files in computer documents. The

reporting stage includes providing detailed explanations of experiences, interpreting topics to develop details without repetition or overlap, classifying and providing more specific examples, developing a comprehensive explanation of the meaning and essence of experiences, and uncovering knowledge shared by all informants. Finally, the process concludes with creating a combined description from the informants.

In this research, several techniques are used for data collection, namely (1) interviews, (2) observation, and (3) documentation. Specifically, qualitative research conducts the data collection process naturally and usually involves primary data sources. In this case, the most dominant data collection techniques are participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

(1) An interview is an interaction process between the interviewer and the interviewee. In this interview, communication is conducted directly to obtain relevant information for the research. The interview is one of the most commonly used techniques for data collection in qualitative research. This technique allows researchers to gather diverse information from respondents in various situations and contexts. Nevertheless, researchers must use interviews carefully and perform data triangulation with other sources to ensure the accuracy and validity of the collected information (Yusra et al., 2021).

Through interviews, researchers can directly interact with participants, allowing them to ask questions face-to-face. This technique allows participants to convey information directly, enabling researchers to obtain more detailed and comprehensive answers. In other words, an interview is a question-and-answer session where the interviewer seeks to extract information from the respondent.

(2) Observation is a data collection method involving direct field observation. In qualitative research, observation is a

fundamental technique researchers can use. This technique is important because it allows researchers to observe the studied phenomenon directly. By conducting observations, researchers can obtain more in-depth and accurate information about behaviours, interactions, and contexts relevant to the research object. Observation also provides an opportunity for researchers to record events in real-time, which can assist in more comprehensive data analysis (Anis, Fuad, dan Kandung 2014).

(3) Documentation is one of the most important secondary data sources in research. The term documentation originates from the word "document," which refers to any form of written material. This method involves collecting data by recording existing information. This data source includes various documents, such as reports, archives, records, and other written materials that can provide additional information. Documentation is essential in qualitative research because it can be used to trace historical data about individuals, groups, events, or occurrences within a social context. Furthermore, documentation helps researchers enrich the research context and provide more substantial evidence to explain the phenomenon. In qualitative research, documentation provides logical and rational evidence to support or refute the proposed hypothesis (Yusra et al., 2021).

According to Miles and Huberman, qualitative data analysis is conducted interactively and continuously until the process is complete. It involves data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. In this study, the researcher applied the data analysis technique known as the Miles & Huberman model. The stages include data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusion as shown in Figure 2:

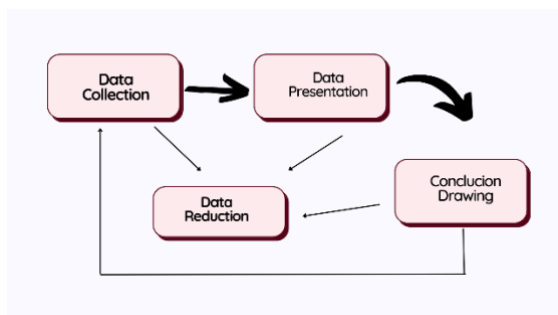


Figure 2: Miles and Huberman Data Analysis Diagram
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

- (1) Data collection is gathering information that enables researchers to draw conclusions and take action.
- (2) Data reduction is the process of filtering, focusing, and simplifying various types of information relevant to the research data collected and recorded during the field research. Data reduction is a step in qualitative data analysis aimed at clarifying, categorizing, directing, and focusing data by eliminating irrelevant information and simplifying less relevant details.
- (3) Data presentation organizes information systematically to conclude qualitative research. Data presentation can be done in summaries, diagrams, or other formats, which help researchers understand the existing issues and plan the next steps based on that understanding.

Conclusion drawing is the final stage of the series of steps that have been previously undertaken. The conclusions are derived from the data analyzed and verified based on the evidence obtained at the research site (Zulfirman, 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Culture of the Kudus Community

The people of Kudus have a unique cultural richness, particularly in fashion, such as kebaya and batik. The kebaya in Kudus has undergone significant innovation, with various modern models that are simpler and easier to produce. In stores, the kebaya offered today follows tradition and is influenced by global trends, such as kebaya with a Korean style (Hidayati, 2024). This shows that the people of Kudus can adapt to new styles while respecting their cultural heritage. Since 2009, UNESCO designated batik as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, and Indonesia has set October 2nd as National Batik Day (Taufiqoh et al., 2018). Batik is an integral part of Kudus' culture. In this region, hand-drawn batik has become one of the leading products, with a production process that involves precision and patience. The people of Kudus are known as meticulous batik artisans, producing high-quality works with unique motifs that reflect local values (Darry Prima & Dartono, 2021). In addition, Kudus batik is often showcased in various events, which helps introduce and promote local culture to a broader audience.

In marketing, the people of Kudus utilize modern technology to reach offline and online consumers. This is evident in using social media platforms like TikTok to promote batik and kebaya products (Fauzi, 2024). Innovative marketing strategies have allowed Kudus's fashion products to become recognized throughout Indonesia and abroad. This shows that the people of Kudus preserve tradition and adapt to the changing times. Social activities, such as community gatherings and the PKK (Family Welfare Movement), are important in maintaining Kudus culture. Through these events, the people of Kudus exchange information and promote local products. This fosters a sense of togetherness and a strong identity among them. These social activities help the community to continuously innovate in creating products that match market tastes, ensuring the

relevance of their culture amidst changing times. These results are relevant to the study by Zahro, Nafi et al. (2019), which states that batik artisans must be able to identify current trends in the market and avoid offering a large number of similar products. Instead, they should be able to create a variety of designs/motifs that have their distinctive characteristics.

Overall, the culture of the Kudus community is a blend of tradition and innovation. The people of Kudus preserve their cultural heritage and develop and adapt it to the needs and tastes of the younger generation. Thus, Kudus is an example of how local culture can survive and thrive in the modern era without losing its original identity. The success of the Kudus community in merging tradition and modernity provides a valuable learning model for other regions in Indonesia. Through a balanced approach between preserving cultural heritage and adapting to the changing times, Kudus has proven that traditional values and technological advancements can go hand in hand. This is reflected in how traditional products such as batik and kebaya not only survive but have flourished through design innovations and digital marketing strategies while still maintaining the essence and unique characteristics of Kudus culture, which is a source of pride for its people (Fatihatur Rohmah & Legowo, 2022).

The Aesthetics of Kudus Fashion

Kudus traditional clothing, such as kebaya and batik, has a distinctive aesthetic that continues to evolve. Design innovations reflect the adaptation to the needs of modern society without losing traditional values. Today, the Kudus kebaya features simple yet elegant designs, such as the "kutu baru" model with a Shanghai collar, crop styles, or combinations of modern embroidery. These changes are supported by production technologies such as computer embroidery and comfortable materials like

cotton and tie-dye fabric. This result is relevant to the study by Talitha Nagata and Yan Yan Sunarya (2023), which states that after the abolition of social classes, variations in kebaya collars have been unified across the upper, middle, and lower classes. Nowadays, kebaya collars are worn by all social classes, regardless of their status, and modern kebaya collar variations are now available. These include V-neck collars, Shanghai collars, Sabrina collars, heart-shaped collars, off-shoulder collars, U-shaped collars, and square collars. Kudus batik stands out with its distinctive motifs, such as the Tower (Menara), Parijoto, and fern leaves (daun pakis), which reflect the local identity (Sunyoto et al., 2020). Batik is divided into three categories: first is hand-drawn batik (batik tulis), where the fabric is given batik patterns using a canting tool; second is stamped batik (batik cap), where the fabric is decorated with batik patterns using copper stamps. The third is combined batik (batik kombinasi), where hand-drawn and stamped techniques are used together. Nowadays, batik can be produced quickly thanks to technological advancements and the use of screen printing (Sugiyem, 2014). To attract the younger generation's interest, batik designs are modified using bright colours and minimalist motifs, making them suitable for formal and casual events as shown in Figure 3:



Figure 3: Kebaya dress at Pasar Kliwon
(Source : Researcher, 2024)

The transformation of Kudus fashion aesthetics is also evident in the public's view of kebaya and batik. Once simple yet modest, traditional kebaya is now adapted to modern values, such as designs that accommodate hijab wearers. Similarly, older generations prefer subdued colours with batik, while younger people opt for dynamic motifs with bright colours. The harmony between tradition and innovation has made traditional clothing from Kudus relevant in the modern era. Batik continues to be relevant and popular among young people thanks to brighter colours, dynamic designs and updated motifs (Justin Bedford et al., 2024). Both kebaya and batik continue to evolve as forms of art and culture that are appreciated by both the local community and outsiders. This adaptation ensures the continuity of traditional values within contemporary needs.

This shows that innovation in fashion aesthetics not only preserves the uniqueness of local traditions but also plays a crucial role in ensuring that Kudus traditional clothing remains relevant amidst the progression of time. With the combination of modern designs and cultural values, these garments not only capture the attention of the local community but also manage to penetrate global markets. This approach provides opportunities for the younger generation to appreciate and preserve their cultural heritage while fostering pride in their local identity (Dewayani & Wasino, 2021). Through continuous innovation, Kudus's traditional clothing proves that tradition can coexist with progress without losing its original meaning and values.

Traditional Fashion of the Kudus

Community

Batik has become one of Kudus's cultural identities. The Kudus batik motifs are renowned for their delicate and beautiful designs. The hallmark of the craftsmanship lies in the intricate details and the satisfactory execution of the patterns, particularly in the "nyonya batik," "peranakan batik," and "saudagaran batik," which are created by Chinese ethnic batik makers. The variety of motifs and the use of brownish-greenish "sogan" dye showcase the traditional quality of Kudus batik (Azizah et al., 2021). This batik can be found in various forms of clothing, such as shirts, dresses, and kebayas. For women, the kebaya is a garment commonly worn during formal events or rituals. The Kudus kebaya is known for its elegant design and is often paired with batik or songket fabric, enhancing its traditional beauty and cultural significance.

Kudus batik is one of Indonesia's cultural heritage that boasts a wealth of distinctive motifs and colours, particularly among the people of Kudus, Central Java. This batik is known for its characteristic designs that are refined, elegant, and rich in symbolic meaning. The motifs of Kudus batik are typically inspired by nature, such as plants, animals, and elements related to the daily life of the Kudus community. The ornamental motifs are unique and special because their sources of inspiration come from the local environment and culture, such as the Kudus region and the surrounding Muria Mountains (Azizah et al., 2021).

The colours used in Kudus batik are generally bright and soft, such as pink, blue, brown, and green, reflecting peace and fertility. One of the most well-known motifs is the "sidomukti" motif, which symbolizes happiness and prosperity, and the "ceplok" motif, which gives a neat and structured impression. In Javanese weddings, the Sidomukti batik is used to convey hopes for the newlyweds to live a prosperous,

peaceful, and successful life. Ornaments like buildings symbolize freedom, structures represent strength, birds signify strength in the home, flowers represent well-being, and mountains and Meru symbolize grandeur and magnificence. Together, they reflect happiness and success in life (Aflaha & Superman, 2022).

Kudus batik clothing is often worn for formal events, religious ceremonies, or traditional rituals. Because batik was once considered too formal, young people typically did not want to wear it. However, due to the evolution of batik, young people now wear it more frequently. Additionally, contemporary batik clothing gives off a casual impression, making it less formal and more appealing to the younger generation (Riandova et al., 2022). This batik fabric is often paired with traditional clothing, such as kebayas for women or suits for men during special occasions. Kudus batik is also worn as everyday clothing by the people of Kudus and those outside Kudus who appreciate its uniqueness and quality. Overall, Kudus batik fashion represents a blend of tradition and aesthetics, showcasing a rich cultural heritage that remains preserved today as shown in Figure :4:



Figure 4: Various Batik Motifs at Pasar Kliwon
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

In the era of modernization, the kebaya comes in various styles and designs. Some feature more contemporary and simple cuts, while others maintain traditional elements with a more modern touch. This allows individuals to choose a kebaya that suits their personal taste and style (Hadi et al., 2024). The people of Kudus also wear the kebaya as fashion for certain activities or events. The Kudus kebaya has distinctive features that combine traditional and modern elements. Typically, this kebaya uses woven fabric or batik with unique Kudus motifs, often incorporating elegant geometric or floral patterns.

The top of the Kudus kebaya is often designed with a more straightforward, streamlined cut, highlighting delicate details such as embroidery or sequins. The sleeves of the kebaya can vary, ranging from long sleeves to short sleeves, maintaining a modest and elegant design. Paired with a lower garment, usually batik or songket fabric with matching patterns, creates a formal yet comfortable impression. The traditional attire for men in Kudus consists of foot coverings, a Laseman batik sarong, a headband with a Laseman batik pattern, a closed-neck suit jacket, and a pocket watch with a long chain. The bamboo woven hat, folded bun (*sanggul tekuk*), earrings (*subang*), velvet shirt with gold buttons, *senyok* necklace, lurik shawl (*selendang lurik temu gdhong*), Lasem batik skirt (*kain asiran Lasem*), and black slippers (*slop hitam*) are all components of traditional attire for women (Widhiastanto, 2018). On certain occasions, the people of Kudus also choose to wear shawls or additional accessories, such as brooches or necklaces, that enhance the appearance of the kebaya. The colours commonly used in Kudus kebaya are soft and natural tones, although bright and bold colours are also used for specific events.

Overall, the Kudus kebaya reflects the values of elegance and simplicity of the people of Kudus, who sincerely appreciate tradition while remaining open to fashion development.

Transformation of Modern Fashion in the Kudus Community

The transformation of modern fashion in Kudus involves blending traditional elements with modernity and incorporating technology in the production and marketing processes. This can be observed in the changes in kebaya, which initially featured a stage with a jerk skirt and traditional motifs that were somewhat revealing. Kebaya has become more flexible, simpler, and modest, even paired with hijabs. This is relevant to the study by Hadi et al. (2024), which states that thanks to modernization, kebaya is now available in various variations. Contemporary kebaya comes in a wide range of styles and designs. Some kebayas have a more modern and straightforward cut, while others retain traditional elements with a more modern touch.

The form of kebaya has also become more diverse, such as the crop kebaya, often paired with a shawl or sometimes combined with modern attire like jeans. The crop top, or short blouse that exposes the stomach area, has become quite popular today, especially among teenagers and adults. This is one of the fashion trends booming recently, particularly during 2022–2023 (Anakku Saviola et al., 2023). Young people also tend to combine modern elements, such as Korean style, with the kebaya, although this is sometimes considered "odd" by some due to the cultural context differences. Integrating kebaya as an Indonesian cultural identity shows a hierarchy and power imbalance between interacting cultures, where Korean culture becomes dominant, potentially sidelining local culture (A.P.Simanjuntak

et al., 2024) as shown in Figure 5:



Figure 5: Various Batik Clothes with Different Styles
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

Traditionally, traditional clothing followed strict rules related to specific events (for example, certain batik patterns for weddings or royal families), but today, it has become more flexible. The general public can wear traditional attire at formal and informal events, such as parties. Additionally, once done manually, embroidery has now shifted to machine embroidery to improve efficiency and design consistency. The process of creating sequins, which used to be intricate and done by hand, is now faster with the aid of machines. For efficiency and consistency in patterns, embroidery on clothing is typically done with machines. However, variations of sequins are still often made by hand due to the unique beauty they produce (Vera et al., 2021).

Furthermore, batik with characteristic motifs such as the Kudus tower and parity are combined with other traditional batik designs from across Indonesia to make them more acceptable in markets outside Kudus. Today's youth prefer batik with brighter and bolder colours and more flexible patterns, and they often mix batik fabric with plain or other patterned fabrics. The batik industry must also update its designs to keep up with trends and maintain market interest. One of the

innovations in batik is eco-printing, where motifs from natural leaves and flowers are printed onto fabric. This reflects the adaptation of local culture in an environmentally friendly manner. This finding aligns with the research of Hikmah & Retnasari (2021), which states that eco-printing is a technique of dyeing and creating patterns on fabric using natural materials such as flowers, leaves, stems, roots, or parts of plants that contain pigments as shown in Figure 6:



Figure 6: Batik Fabric is Made into Various Types of Clothing
(Source: Researcher, 2024)

Batik producers must maintain the existence of batik in society in this modern era, especially among young people. Therefore, innovation is necessary to embrace tradition. It is essential to attract the market by utilizing available digital technology. Using digital technology, Batik SMEs can increase market reach, build brands, enhance consumer engagement, and boost sales. Digital technology also offers advantages in simplifying transactions and analyzing real-time marketing performance (Mutaufiq et al., 2023).

CONCLUSIONS

The aesthetics and cultural values in the clothing of the people of Kudus, Central Java, are influenced by the shift in fashion from tradition to modernity. The clothing culture of Kudus blends tradition and modernity. For instance, Kebaya and Batik

Kudus retain their traditional characteristics, including local motifs and cultural aesthetic values, but have been adapted to contemporary styles, including those favoured by the younger generation. Modernization has positively impacted design innovation and improved production efficiency through technology and digital marketing, expanding global market reach. Still, it also challenges preserving traditional cultural values, especially for the younger generation, who are more susceptible to international trends. The ability of the people of Kudus to combine traditional values with the advancement of time shows their ability to create a strong cultural identity.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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