

WEST KALIMANTAN DAYAK TATTOO AS A CULTURAL IDENTITY IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

Indonesia, as a country with diverse ethnic groups and cultures, has certainly passed on many cultures to the next generation to preserve their existence. However, in modern times, many cultures have begun to shift or lose their meaning. One of them is the Dayak tattoo art, which was previously considered sacred by society, but is now only seen as ordinary art. This research was conducted to find out how to maintain Dayak's tattoo art in the modern era. Tattoos in the Dayak tribe of West Kalimantan are the object of this research. The research was conducted using qualitative methods through interviews, documentation, and direct observation in the Dayak community. Results of the research show that Dayak tattoos are not just art, but are an identity with high traditional values as seen through tattoo motifs and colors. This research aims to determine the forms of Dayak tattoos with their philosophical meaning and role in society. Research is useful for increasing insight into the traditional values contained in Dayak tattoo art so that it can help preserve this cultural heritage. Research can also be an additional literature reference for other researchers.

Keywords: Culture, Tattoo, Dayak Tribe, Traditional

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that has a diversity of ethnic groups and cultures. There are more than a thousand tribes and cultures. Culture is a measure of behavior that humans do in living their lives. The culture adopted by a society holds values regarding the human view of the world, the environment and society. These values are used as guidelines to determine attitudes towards the outside world and even become the basic guidelines for every step they take (Herusatoto, 2003). Culture is included in the concept of psychological constructs. This concept examines the extent to which a group of people collectively uphold an attitude, belief, behavior and values. Culture is passed down to the next generation through oral expression or based on observation (Matsumoto et al., 2008). According to (Coomans, 1987), the development and fostering of cultural values in Indonesia can help strengthen the nation's personality, thicken the self-esteem of each community and strengthen the spirit of national unity. The culture found in the regions of Indonesia can be used as a national identity with its own characteristics and flows and develops in the life order of the people in it.

In areas of Kalimantan Island, there is an indigenous tribe that is a heterogeneous community with many ethnic groups in it. The indigenous tribe is known as the Dayak. The Dayak tribe is divided into many sub-tribes (Lontaan, 1975). Each sub-tribe has a tradition, ceremony, language and culture that is different from other sub-tribes. The Dayak tribe upholds traditions and customs or culture in their daily lives even though humans cannot be separated from culture. The Dayak tribe has cultural traditions such as traditional harvest ceremonies, death ceremonies, marriage ceremonies, dances, lengthening earlobes, youth festivals, and tattoos (Maunati, 2003). One culture that is still upheld by the Dayak people is tattoo art. Tattoos are not only found in urban areas known for their progress and modernization. Tattoos were not born in the modern world (Olong, 2006). Historically, tattoos were born out of a rural, traditional or even ancient culture. Tattooing is an art that has existed since time immemorial and has become part of a culture that is highly regarded as sacred, especially for the Dayak tribe in Kalimantan. This body carving art is not just for style, tattoos are part of a tradition each motif has meaning, philosophy, and traditional values contained in it. So that in making this tattoo can't be done arbitrarily. There are unwritten rules that must be followed. Tattoo motifs also show the social stratification of the user. In addition, the motif also shows the achievements that have been achieved during his lifetime.

For the Dayak people, this tattoo art is something that is considered noble, has high value, and is sacred. Dayak tattoo art is a cultural identity. Tattoo art should not be eliminated from the customs that have been adopted, so that the art of tattooing is passed down from generation to generation as an effort to preserve this culture. Nowadays, when the era of modernization is growing, many cultures are increasingly displaced before finally being forgotten. Tattoo art itself is one culture that has experienced a shift in meaning. Many people, especially young people, do not know the origin of tattoo art and consider it as an ordinary body carving art without any particular meaning. Tattoos began to develop into a trend. Tattoo art that was previously part of traditional culture can now be said to be an urban culture (Setiawan & Jayanegara, 2016).

Its existence as a culture began to erode and began to be considered ordinary art. If left unchecked, this Dayak tattoo art culture will be lost to the times (Karyadi, 2017). Therefore, this research was conducted to find out how to maintain traditional values in Dayak tattoo art as one of the efforts to preserve culture through the analysis of tattoo motifs, colors used and their philosophical meanings. When compared with several previous studies, this research has similarities in terms of topics, namely regarding tattoos, especially Dayak tribal tattoos. In 2019, research was conducted by Elok Feni Sia and Taufik Akbar Rizky Yunanto who studied "The Meaning and Cultural Consequences of Tattoos in the Dayak Tribe". The focus of the study in this research is related to the identity of tattoos in the Dayak tribe, the conditions that cause the Dayak tribe to carry out tattooing activities and the conditions for the development of tattoo culture in modern times. In 2021, Putu Prashanti Vahini Kumara and I Ketut Westra studied "Protection of Dayak Tribal Tattoo Motifs in the Dimension of Copyright Law in Indonesia". The focus of the study in this research is an analysis of the legal protection arrangements for modern tattoos based on the provisions of copyright law in Indonesia, as well as the protection of Dayak tribal tattoos from a copyright perspective. In other words, this research is a study to preserve the Dayak tribe's tattoo culture.

This research uses a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of tattoo motifs as a representation of cultural identity in the Dayak community. A qualitative approach allows researchers to explore complex and contextual meanings that may be difficult to measure quantitatively. The research subjects involved men and women of various age groups who had traditional tattoos. The selection of subjects was carried out to consider the diversity in tattoo motifs and cultural identity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural diversity in Indonesia

Indonesia is a country rich in cultural diversity, with more than a thousand ethnic groups living side by side in harmony throughout the archipelago. Indonesian society is diverse in culture, religion, and language which has noble values as its local wisdom. This cultural insight into society is integrated through education so that it remains known and preserved (Rachmadyanti et al., 2021). Schools are educational institutions that enable students to become generations. Cultural diversity not only reflects the country's demographics, but is also one of the foundations of national identity. This article aims to explain the importance of maintaining Indonesia's cultural diversity in globalization and modernization. By understanding the complexity and nuances of this diversity, we can better appreciate its role in shaping the social fabric and collective identity of the nation. Despite the challenges of urbanization, globalization, and Western cultural hegemony, there are many opportunities to preserve and promote Indonesia's cultural diversity through community-based initiatives, people's movements, cultural festivals, and the use of digital platforms and social media. With the combined efforts of individuals, communities and government, Indonesia can continue to celebrate its cultural mosaic as a symbol of unity in diversity. Elements of globalization have entered uncontrollably into national culture, which is the embodiment of a local culture that exists in every region from Sabang to Merauke (Nahak, 2019).

The role of culture in national identity

The role of culture in shaping national identity is very important and undeniable. Culture is a mirror of values, traditions, and beliefs that are passed down from generation to generation in a society. The nation's identity is reflected in its rich culture, such as language, customs, art, and historical heritage. Culture is the glue that binds various groups of people together, building a sense of unity and pride in the heritage of the ancestors. In addition, culture is also a foundation for maintaining social diversity, because in every unique culture, there is the potential to enrich life experiences and appreciate differences (Fatin, 2014). By maintaining and strengthening culture, a nation can maintain its identity in the growing globalization and modernization. Therefore, efforts to preserve and develop culture must be a priority for every country in building and strengthening its national identity.

The meaning of culture in Indonesia is closely related to the cultural traditions and rituals that emerge in society. These cultural aspects are the main markers in forming the identity and identity of a group in the social realm. Indonesian people tend to make tradition the main pillar in maintaining cultural heritage which is passed down from generation to generation. Religious rituals, traditional ceremonies, and collective celebrations are concrete manifestations of respect for the noble values inherited from their ancestors. Through these practices, the younger generation learns to appreciate and absorb local wisdom which is an integral part of national life (Ode Muhammad Idrus Hamid et al., 2023).

Dayak culture in West Kalimantan

The Dayak tribe views their culture as a way of life. Because the Dayak tribe does exist and has its own unique culture, it is quite difficult to differentiate one from another. For example, they differ in terms of costumes, ritual ceremonies, language, and even customary laws. In some ways, these cultures inspire them to respond to external challenges that are foreign to them, such as globalization, liberalization and computerization. In terms of language, there are various languages among the Dayak community. For example, the Bidayuh tribe uses «bidayuh» language and the Iban tribe uses «iban» language (Sada et al., 2019).

The Dayak culture in West Kalimantan has a very important role in enriching Indonesia's cultural diversity. The Dayak tribe is known for its rich tradition of traditional values and local wisdom that has been passed down from generation to generation. Among the various Dayak cultures, tattoo art is one of the cultural expressions that is highly valued and upheld. Dayak tattoo art is not just an ordinary body carving art, but an integral part of daily life, with deep philosophical meanings and traditional values (Sia & Yunanto, 2019). Dayak tattoo motifs are not only visual decorations, but also tell stories of history, social status, life achievements, and strengthen intergenerational cultural ties (Vahini Kumara & Westra, 2021). By maintaining and promoting Dayak tattoo art, the West Kalimantan

Dayak Tribe can strengthen their cultural identity, while making a valuable contribution to Indonesia's overall cultural diversity.

Tattoo art as part of Dayak culture

The identity of the Dayak ethnic group that comes to the minds of Indonesian people is the native Kalimantan tribe, inland communities who live communally, headhunting, live in longhouses, primitive communities, people with unique elongated ear holes, nomadic livelihoods, distinctive tattoos, unique dances, frequent play, clothing with trinkets, farming, and hunting as part of life, in predominantly non-Islamic societies. However, as time goes by, it cannot be denied that these identities have changed according to the social conditions of society and not all identities are given and known as facts of the Dayak tribe (Robbaniyah et al., 2023).

Tattoo art is an integral part of Dayak culture in West Kalimantan. Tattoos are not just ordinary body carving art, but a symbol of pride, honor, and identity for the Dayak people. Each tattoo motif has a deep philosophical meaning, telling ancient stories, myths, and life values passed down from generation to generation. More than just aesthetics, Dayak tattoo art is a powerful form of visual communication, connecting individuals to their ancestral culture. In addition, tattoo art also plays an important role in strengthening social solidarity and maintaining customary traditions within the Dayak community. By understanding and appreciating tattoo art as an integral part of Dayak culture, we can honor this valuable cultural heritage and help maintain the sustainability and diversity of Indonesian culture (Daniel Tambuarian, 2018).

The role of research in cultural preservation

Tattoos have become a characteristic of the majority of Dayak people in Kalimantan. For the Dayak people, tattoos are something that cannot be separated from their bodies. Tattoos are sacred and associated with various events and purposes which are considered a form of culture in Kalimantan (Vahini Kumara & Westra, 2021a). Each tattoo motif has a deep philosophical meaning, telling ancient stories, myths, and life values passed down from generation to generation. More than just aesthetics, Dayak tattoo art is a powerful form of visual communication, connecting individuals to their ancestral culture. In addition, tattoo art also plays an important role in strengthening social solidarity and maintaining customary traditions within the Dayak community. By understanding and appreciating tattoo art as an integral part of Dayak culture, we can honor this valuable cultural heritage and help maintain the sustainability and diversity of Indonesian culture.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of tattoo motifs as a representation of cultural identity in Dayak society. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore complex and contextual meanings that may be difficult to measure quantitatively. This research was conducted in several Dayak communities in West Kalimantan. The research subjects involved men and women from various age groups who have traditional tattoos. The selection of subjects was done to consider diversity in tattoo motifs and cultural identity. The data collection methods used in this research include (1) In-depth Interviews: Interviews were conducted with members of the Dayak community who have tattoos, focusing on their understanding of the meaning of tattoo motifs related to cultural identity. (2) Direct Observation: Researchers were actively involved in the daily activities of the community, observing and recording the use of tattoos in various social contexts.

DISCUSSION

Dayak tattoo art has deep cultural value and is an important part of the cultural identity of the Dayak Tribe in Kalimantan. Nonetheless, in recent years, Dayak tattoo art has undergone significant changes in the context of public understanding, use, and appreciation, especially among the younger generation. Discussions about efforts to preserve Dayak tattoo art are relevant in facing the challenges of modernization and globalization.

Changes in the Understanding and Use of Dayak Tattoo Motifs

Changes in the understanding and use of Dayak tattoo motifs reflect a complex cultural evolution amid the influence of modernization and globalization (Sepa et al., 2019). In ancient times, Dayak tattoo motifs had deep meanings and were rich in symbols related to the spiritual, social, and historical aspects of Dayak culture. The motifs often represented tribal identity, social status, achievements in life, or protection from supernatural forces. However, over time and the influx of outside influences, especially through mass media and the internet, the understanding and use of Dayak tattoo motifs has undergone a significant shift. The younger generation tends to have wider access to information and inspiration from outside their own culture. This sometimes results in different interpretations of traditional motifs, as well as the creation of new motifs inspired by trends.

According to Abel as a Dayak community member in an interview conducted about the modification of Dayak tattoo motifs, the interviewee considers it acceptable as long as it does not deviate too far from the original motif (Azis. M. R, 2023). The interviewees also argued that the use of commercialized Dayak tribal tattoo motifs is a form of pride in Dayak tribal culture. Overall, the interviewees' views show that tattoos for them are a form of self-expression through art, and they appreciate the cultural values and traditions of Dayak tattoos. They consider tattoos as a form of identity and characteristic that is important to preserve, while still considering respect for the meaning and context of the motif.

Symbolic Understanding

The symbolic understanding of traditional Dayak tattoos reflects a cultural heritage rich in meaning and deep spiritual, social and historical values (Driyanti, 2011). In Dayak culture, tattoos are not only body decoration, but also an expression that is full of deep meanings. Here are some examples of symbolic meanings in Dayak tattoos:

- Bunga Terung

Symbol of an adult, old enough to marry and migrate. Eggplant flowers are usually drawn on the shoulders of young Dayak men. This motif symbolizes a hardworking man for the family. Eggplant flower tattoos are shaped like the flowers of the type of eggplant vegetable that is prevalent in Kalimantan. Its circular shape symbolizes strength for men.

Eggplant flowers are given to Iban men who are considered old enough to undergo certain rituals. This rite of passage is "berjalai" which means going to the next village. In Saussure's theory of Signs, Signifiers and Signifieds, the Signifier Eggplant Flower is a black flower with 8 petals which are placed on both shoulders with the meaning of the Signified, namely being "stretched". Therefore, the eggplant flower is a sign of an Iban man who is "bachelor" (coming of age) (Jumpe, 2019).



Figure 1: Tato Bunga Terung

Source: (Azis. M. R, 2023)

- Engkabang (Buah Tengkawang)

A savior symbol for the Dayak tribe, as a source of food for the Dayak tribe in ancient times. The ngkabang/tengkawang flower motif tattoo symbolizes the source of life. The tengkawang fruit is the flower most commonly found in Iban villages and is tattooed on the stomach. This motif is often carved on the back of the thigh, meaning that when people migrate, people always go far and the andu fruit is food to continue life (Azis. M. R, 2023).



Figure 2: Tato Bunga Tengkawang

Source: (Aziz. M. R, 2023)

- Buah Handu

A savior symbol for the Dayak tribe, as a source of food for the Dayak tribe in ancient times (Azis. M. R, 2023).



Figure 3: Tato Buah Handu

Source: (Aziz. M. R, 2023)

- Ketam

Tato Ketam is a group of donkey tattoos, namely the donkey ketam. Kelingai Ketam tattoos are known as tattoos that show a person's courage and masculinity. It is located on the left and right ribs. Some put / carve this tattoo on both shoulders or both arms (Aziz. M. R, 2023).



Figure 4: Tato Ketam

Source: (Aziz. M. R, 2023)

- Tegulun

A symbol of achievement for people who have ngayau (beheaded) as a sign of war victory. The tegulun tattoo motif is just a black line on each knuckle of a young Dayak man. This tattoo symbolizes his status as the main warrior who has the right to behead every enemy. Not just any Dayak youth has the right to bear this tattoo motif. Only those who are tough and get approval from traditional elders. In the past, the Dayak tribe often fought wars between tribes to seize each other's territory. The winning tribe will behead the opposing warrior as a symbol of its power (Aziz. M. R, 2023).



Figure 5: Tato Tegulun

Source: (Aziz. M. R, 2023)

Use of Motifs in the Modern Context

The use of Dayak tattoo motifs has also changed in the modern context. Motifs that were once only found on the bodies of elders or people who have a certain status in society can now be found in various circles, including among young people who want to express themselves or adopt a certain lifestyle. According to Agas Frial, who works as a traditional tattoo artist, the meaning of Dayak tattoos has shifted and the motifs can be developed. According to the informant, it does not matter if the motif has changed as long as it is still in place. However, there are some tattoo motifs that have sacred value and should not be changed or used carelessly, such as the tegulun motif which is a special award. The informant explained that for the Dayak tribe, tattoos have meaning as symbols, social status, and awards. They consider tattoos to be important to the Dayak tribe. Regarding the modification of Dayak motifs, the interviewees said that it is a natural thing to do, especially if requested by consumers. However, motifs that have sacred value should not be modified or used carelessly, such as the tegulun motif. The youth group has concerns related to employment issues, feeling afraid that it will be difficult to find a job and having social responsibility for negative perceptions of tattoos in general, the consequences will be labeled as a wayward child by their environment (Juniarto, 2017). In today's modern era, there are also many people who use tattoos as a form of art without knowing the real meaning so that there is a shift in the meaning of tattoos in today's modern era.

Preservation Efforts

Preservation efforts regarding traditional Dayak tattoos can be linked to tattoos as an object of copyright protection in the form of images receiving automatic protection as specified in Article 40 letter f UUHC. This reflects a strong commitment to safeguarding this rich and unique cultural heritage from extinction (Vahini Kumara & Westra, 2021). Stakeholders, both from the Dayak tribe itself and external parties, have made various efforts to promote, protect and preserve the practice and knowledge of this traditional tattoo.

The Dayak tribal community often holds annual events to continue preserving their culture, commonly known as "Gawai Dayak", which is also supported by the West Kalimantan regional government. The Dayak people also continue to preserve their culture through arts such as tattoos, dance and their cultural clothing.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Dayak tattoo art is a cultural identity rich in meaning, philosophy, and traditional values that need to be preserved. Despite facing challenges from modernization and changing contemporary trends, it is important to understand and fight for the preservation of Dayak tattoo art as part of Indonesia's cultural identity. In the context of Dayak tattoo art preservation, there needs to be a comprehensive and sustainable effort. First, it is important to increase people's understanding of the meaning and values contained in Dayak tattoo art. This can be done through education, cultural awareness, and promotion of the proper use of Dayak tattoo art. Collaboration between relevant parties, including the Dayak community, government, cultural institutions, and researchers, is needed in the effort to preserve Dayak tattoo art. This collaboration may include the development of preservation programs, further research on Dayak tattoo art, and promotion of the culture at large. It is important to create a balance between maintaining tradition and accommodating the changing times. While keeping the deep cultural roots of Dayak tattoo art, it is also important to update approaches and strategies in promoting Dayak tattoo art to keep it relevant and appreciated by the younger generation. By combining these efforts, we can hope that Dayak tattoo art will continue to be a vibrant and valuable part of Indonesian culture, as well as a source of pride for the Dayak Tribe and the entire Indonesian nation.

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