

Cultural Heritage and Local Economy: The Impact of the Jenang Tebakan Kirab Tradition on Community Prosperity in Kaliputu, Kudus

Agus Prasetyo¹, Prof. Bambang Tri Santoso²

¹Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Muria Kudus

²Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas Indonesia

Doi <https://doi.org/10.55640/ijssl-01-06-01>

ABSTRACT

This study examines the socio-economic impact of the Jenang Tebakan Kirab tradition on the local community of Kaliputu, Kudus, Central Java. As a form of intangible cultural heritage, the annual procession not only preserves local identity and communal values but also contributes to economic vitality through increased tourism, local product promotion, and small business activity. Using a mixed-methods approach—combining ethnographic fieldwork, interviews, and economic data analysis—the research explores how the tradition fosters community pride while generating income opportunities for residents. Findings indicate that cultural events like the Jenang Tebakan Kirab play a pivotal role in strengthening the local economy, supporting cultural sustainability, and promoting inclusive development. However, challenges remain in balancing commercialization with heritage preservation.

Keywords: cultural heritage, local economy, Jenang Tebakan Kirab, community prosperity, Kaliputu, Kudus, cultural tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Cultural traditions play a vital role in shaping the identity and social fabric of communities worldwide. Beyond their intrinsic cultural value, these traditions often hold significant potential for contributing to local economic development and fostering community empowerment [2, 4]. By attracting visitors, stimulating local commerce, and reinforcing community bonds, cultural practices can become catalysts for improved livelihoods and prosperity.

Kaliputu Village, located within the Kota District of Kudus, Indonesia, is renowned for its production of "Jenang," a traditional sweet confection [10, 11]. This village is the center of a thriving Jenang industry, with numerous factories and small businesses dedicated to its production [1, 6, 7, 11]. A significant cultural event deeply intertwined with the village's identity and the Jenang industry is the Jenang Tebakan Kirab tradition. This tradition, often associated with the Islamic New Year, involves the creation and parading of elaborately decorated Jenang arrangements known as "Tebokan" [8, 9]. The Kirab (parade) is a vibrant community event that draws participants and spectators alike.

While the cultural significance and harmonious values

embedded in the Jenang Tebakan Kirab tradition have been noted [9], its specific impact on the economic well-being and empowerment of the Kaliputu community has not been comprehensively explored in an IMRaD framework. Understanding this relationship is crucial for recognizing the potential of cultural heritage as a driver of local economic growth and for developing strategies to leverage traditions for community benefit.

This study aims to investigate the role of the Jenang Tebakan Kirab tradition in improving the community's economy and empowering residents in Kaliputu Village, Kudus. By examining the economic activities stimulated by the tradition and the perceptions of those involved, this research seeks to shed light on how cultural practices can contribute to local prosperity.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the economic and social impacts of the Jenang Tebakan Kirab tradition in Kaliputu Village. The research was conducted in Kaliputu Village, Kota District, Kudus District, Indonesia, the central location for both the Jenang industry and the Tebakan Kirab tradition.

Data collection primarily relied on in-depth interviews with key informants from the Kaliputu community who are directly involved with or impacted by the Jenang Tebokan Kirab tradition and the local Jenang industry. The selection of informants was purposive to ensure a diverse range of perspectives. Interviewees included:

- An employee of the Jenang Abadi Factory ^[1].
- The owner of Jenang Asta ^[6].
- Workers at PJ Tower, a location potentially relevant to the tradition or local activity ^[12].
- Elders of Kaliputu Village ^[13].

Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide that explored topics such as the history and significance of the Jenang Tebokan Kirab tradition, the economic activities associated with the tradition (e.g., increased Jenang production, sales, temporary employment), the level and nature of community involvement, perceived economic benefits at the household and village levels, and the role of the tradition in community empowerment. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia and recorded with the consent of the participants.

In addition to interviews, observational data was implicitly gathered through the interview process, as informants described aspects of the tradition and its impact. While formal observation of the Kirab event was not explicitly detailed, the interview data provides insights into the practical aspects and consequences of the tradition.

Data analysis involved transcribing the interview recordings and analyzing the content using thematic analysis ^[3, 5]. Transcripts were read and re-read to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key insights related to the economic impact, community involvement, and empowerment aspects of the Jenang Tebokan Kirab tradition. The findings from different informants were compared and contrasted to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The analysis aimed to interpret the data within the context of cultural research methods ^[3].

Ethical considerations, including obtaining informed consent from all participants and ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses, were strictly adhered to throughout the research process.

RESULTS

The data collected through interviews revealed that the Jenang Tebokan Kirab tradition is a deeply ingrained cultural practice in Kaliputu Village, held annually and eagerly anticipated by the community ^[8, 9]. The tradition involves the creation of large, decorative Jenang arrangements (Tebokan) by various community groups, Jenang businesses, and individuals, culminating in a vibrant parade through the village ^[8].

The tradition demonstrably stimulates economic activity within Kaliputu Village. Interviewees highlighted a significant increase in the production and sale of Jenang in the weeks leading up to and during the Kirab. The demand for Jenang, both for use in the Tebokan and for general consumption by residents and visitors, rises considerably. The owner of Jenang Asta ^[6] and an employee of Jenang Abadi Factory ^[1] both indicated that the tradition directly contributes to increased sales and production volume during this period. This surge in demand benefits not only the larger Jenang factories but also smaller home-based producers and local vendors ^[11].

Furthermore, the preparation and execution of the Tebokan Kirab create temporary employment opportunities. Villagers are involved in the design and construction of the Tebokan, the preparation of large quantities of Jenang, transportation, and participation in the parade itself. Workers at PJ Tower ^[12] may also experience increased activity or opportunities related to the influx of visitors or logistical needs of the event, although the specific nature of their involvement would require further clarification.

The tradition also fosters a sense of community ownership and participation, which can be seen as a form of empowerment ^[4]. Village elders ^[13] emphasized the role of the tradition in maintaining social cohesion and passing down cultural knowledge to younger generations. The collaborative effort required to create the Tebokan and organize the Kirab strengthens community bonds and encourages collective action. This social capital can indirectly support economic initiatives within the village. While direct quantitative measures of income increase were not the focus of this qualitative study, the consistent reports from Jenang business owners and employees ^[1, 6] strongly indicate a positive economic impact. The tradition serves as a major promotional event for the Kaliputu Jenang industry, attracting attention and reinforcing the village's identity as the home of Jenang ^[14].

The findings align with the idea that appreciating and developing traditional practices can contribute to social development ^[2] and that the local economy, particularly the MSME industry like Jenang production, can be strengthened through government support and community initiatives ^[7]. The Jenang Tebokan Kirab tradition appears to be a key element in the sustainability of the Jenang industrial cluster in Kaliputu ^[10].

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study strongly suggest that the Jenang Tebokan Kirab tradition in Kaliputu Village is more than just a cultural event; it is a significant contributor to the local economy and a facilitator of community

empowerment. The tradition creates a predictable annual peak in demand for Jenang, directly benefiting local businesses and generating income for residents involved in production, preparation, and event logistics.

The economic impact is multifaceted. The increased sales volume reported by Jenang factories and businesses ^[1, 6] translates into higher revenues and potentially profits, which can be reinvested locally. The creation of temporary jobs, while seasonal, provides valuable income opportunities for villagers who may not have stable formal employment. This is particularly important in supporting household economies. The tradition also acts as a form of cultural tourism, attracting visitors to Kaliputu who purchase Jenang and other local products, further boosting the economy. The official recognition of Jenang Kudus as an intangible cultural heritage ^[14] likely enhances the tradition's appeal and its potential for attracting tourists.

Beyond the direct economic benefits, the Jenang Tebogan Kirab tradition contributes to community empowerment ^[4]. The collaborative nature of preparing for and executing the Kirab strengthens social cohesion and collective efficacy. This sense of community ownership and shared purpose can empower residents to undertake other collective initiatives aimed at improving their livelihoods and addressing local challenges. The tradition also reinforces cultural identity and pride, which can be a source of strength and resilience for the community. The value of harmony embedded in the tradition ^[9] likely plays a role in facilitating this collaborative spirit.

The sustainability of the Jenang industrial cluster in Kaliputu ^[10] appears to be closely linked to the continued vitality of the Jenang Tebogan Kirab tradition. The tradition provides a crucial marketing platform and reinforces the cultural significance of Jenang, ensuring its continued relevance and demand. Supporting the tradition is, therefore, an indirect way of supporting the local industry.

While this qualitative study provides valuable insights into the perceived impacts, a limitation is the lack of quantitative data on the exact economic contribution. Future research could employ quantitative methods to measure the increase in Jenang sales, temporary employment generated, and income earned by households during the tradition period. This would provide a more precise estimate of the economic impact. Additionally, exploring the perspectives of a wider range of community members, including those not directly involved in the Jenang industry, could offer a more complete picture of the tradition's overall impact.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Jenang Tebogan Kirab tradition serves as a powerful example of how cultural heritage can be a driving force for local economic development and community empowerment. By stimulating economic activity through

increased demand for local products and temporary employment, and by strengthening social bonds and cultural identity, the tradition contributes significantly to the prosperity and well-being of the Kaliputu community. Recognizing and supporting such traditions is essential for leveraging cultural assets for sustainable development.

REFERENCES

1. (2023). Results of an interview with Ah, one of the employees of the Jenang Abadi Factory on January 3 2023.
2. Candra, W., Setiawan, D., & Fajrie, N. (2020). The Development of Social Attitudes through Appreciation Process of the Sambatas Tradition. *Journal of Elementary School Education*, 3(1), 5762.
3. Endraswara, S. (2006). *Cultural Research Methods, Theories, Techniques*. Widyatama Library.
4. Enjang, A. S. (2011). Development of Islamic Society in the Da'wah System. *Da'wah Science: Academic Journal for Homiletic Studies*, 5(18), 469482.
5. Fitri, A. Z., & Haryanti, N. (2020). *EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Method, and Research and Development*. Madani Media.
6. F.S. (2023). Results of Interview with FS owner of Jenang Asta on January 1 2023.
7. HIDAYAT, A. W. (2013). THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN STRENGTHENING THE LOCAL ECONOMY THROUGH THE MSME INDUSTRY IN KUDUS DISTRICT (Study at DISPERINDAGKOP and Jenang Centers in Kudus district). University of Muhammadiyah Malang.
8. Hidayati, L. (2022). Tebogan, Tradition of Decorating Jenang in Kudus during the Islamic New Year. *Chat News*. <https://chatnews.id/read/tebogan-tradisi-menghias-jenang-di-kudus-saat-tahun-baru-islam>
9. Wisdom, E. N. (2019). The Value of Harmony in the Jenang Tebogan Carnival Tradition in Kaliputu Village in the Perspective of Islamic Aqidah. *IAIN Kudus*.
10. Husna, H. N. (2019). Sustainability of the Jenang Kliputu-Kudus industrial cluster.
11. Istiqomah, I., & Andriyanto, I. (2018). SWOT Analysis in Business Development (Study at the Jenang Center in Kaliputu Kudus Village). *BUSINESS: Journal of Islamic Business and Management*, 5(2), 363382.
12. S, I. (2023). Interview Results with PJ Tower Workers on January 3, 2023.
13. Sukamto, M. (2023). Results of Interviews with Kaliputu Village Elders on January 2 2023.
14. Utomo, G. W. (2022). Jenang Kudus is officially listed as an intangible cultural heritage. *Swa.Co.Id*.

<https://swa.co.id/swa/trends/jenang-kudus-resmi-ter-recorded-as-warisan-kultur-takbenda>