

## **Textile Craft Art Punch Needle Technique as an Effort to Preserve Extinct Traditional West Javanese Food as a Learning Resource in Art Education**

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### Abstract

Traditional Indonesian food items, especially those from West Java, are a fundamental part of the culture. However, according to Mei Batubara, Chair of the Pusaka Rasa Nusantara Team, traditional Indonesian food culture is currently in danger owing to the lack of regeneration concerning the cooking skills of traditional dishes. This study focused on the endangered traditional West Javanese foods and highlighted them in the form of textile artwork using punch needle technique. At the same time, it also emphasized the importance of art education in cultural preservation. The current study used a qualitative descriptive design along with literature analysis including interviews with the younger generation and observations at culinary landmarks. According to previous research conducted in 2024, there was an observation that people, especially the younger generation, like fast food more as compared to traditional Indonesian foods because the latter is not seen as practical or modern. The three disappearing traditional foods in West Java, i.e., Deblo, Ali Agrem, and Awug, inspired this research and served as inspiration in creating artworks using traditional foods. Additionally, it was concluded that art education plays a significant role in the formation of artistically trained young individuals who can preserve their culture through art. The findings demonstrate that the integration of traditional culinary heritage into fine arts curricula can foster cultural awareness, enhance creative economy potential, and ensure the continuity of local wisdom. Thus, art education not only produces aesthetic objects but also functions as a strategic instrument for cultural resilience and intercultural dialogue. The resulting textile craft pieces successfully transformed extinct culinary forms into durable visual narratives, suggesting that art education-based preservation strategies offer sustainable alternatives to oral transmission alone.

Keywords: Traditional food, West Java, Textile Craft, Punch Needle Technique, Art Education

## **INTRODUCTION**

As mentioned by Sosroningrat (1991), traditional foods have three features, which include (1) recipe inherited from the old generation; (2) application of certain traditional utensils for its preparation (for example, clay utensils); and (3) methods used for its preparation that are mandatory in order to give a unique flavor and appearance of a dish. West Java province consists of 17 regencies and 9 cities (Parantika & Jenica, 2022). Sundanese foods can be identified based on the studies conducted by Rahmawaty & Maharani (2013), where their main characteristics are light flavors and an abundance of spices.

Unfortunately, as stated by Mei Batubara, Head of the Pusaka Rasa Nusantara Team (Chaniago & Agmasari, 2024), traditional Indonesian cuisine has become street food, and some dishes are at risk of becoming extinct due to technological advancements, including the internet. The main factor behind this is that young people do not have an interest in learning how to prepare traditional foods (Chaniago & Agmasari, 2024; Mau et al., 2024).

As a response to this cultural crisis, art education will play an important role in addressing the situation. The study of fine arts and particularly textile arts is able to provide a formal way to conserve the intangible culture through physical art creations (Bastomi, 2003; Sefmiwati, 2016). Art education teaches students how to utilize technical knowledge, theories, and cultural knowledge in order to convert traditional wisdom into modern art works (Rondhi, 2002; Effendy, 2019). In the context of this study where the integration of local culinary culture into the fine arts education takes place, two objectives can be achieved, namely conservation of culture and economic opportunities (Hasan & Wijayanti, 2021; Putra et al., 2022). Thus, this research is not only documenting the lost West Javanese cuisine but also validating the use of art education in regenerating culture.

## **METHOD**

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach combined with a literature review analysis, including interviews with the younger generation and observations at major culinary destinations.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Endangerment of Traditional West Javanese Cuisine**

According to the findings obtained through interviews with traditional cuisine enterprise owners in Surabaya's cuisine-based tourism hot spots (Mau et al., 2024), many individuals, particularly the younger generation, choose fast foods due to their perceived practicality and modernity compared to the traditional cuisine of Indonesia. Moreover, previous research has repeatedly illustrated how rapid urbanization and invasion of Western food culture has been contributing to the degradation of native food cultures globally (Kuhnlein & Receveur, 2007; Johns, 2012; Popkin, 2017; Kearney, 2021; Li & Siddique, 2022). This can also be observed in the Southeast Asia region where traditional cuisines in Malaysia (Mirzaei et al., 2019), Thailand (Siricharoen & Siricharoen, 2015), and Philippines (Mascariñas et al., 2021) have declined.

The data gathered by the researchers using Focus Group Discussion (FGD) found that there are many traditional foods that became extinct or close to extinction in West Java, specifically *Deblo*, *Ali Agrem*, and *Awug*. *Deblo* is an ancient food that was traditionally made from cassava that was grated into small pieces and was then mixed with coconut and palm sugar and was wrapped using banana leaves before being steamed. *Ali Agrem* is a traditional food that resembled the fried cassava; however, it had a distinct taste due to fermentation, which gave a sour flavor (*Awug* is a traditional cake made of rice flour and brown sugar that was steamed).

## **Art Education as a Preservation Strategy**

As practitioners in the field of fine arts, the researchers created textile craft works using punch needle technique, taking inspiration from food that is now threatened with extinction. Punch needle refers to a hollow, sharp metal needle used manually to push knots of thread, fabric, or yarn through a woven base fabric. Punch needles are embroidery tools resembling pens, equipped with adjustable depth settings, and are available in various sizes ranging from 0.12 cm to 0.5 cm. This technique has been increasingly recognized in contemporary craft education as an accessible yet expressive medium for narrative and cultural expression (Bastomi, 2003; Sefmiwati, 2016; Crawford, 2020; Adamson, 2021; Hemmings, 2022).

The role of art education in this preservation effort cannot be overstated. According to Rondhi (2002) and Sefmiwati (2016), a work of art is a human creation meant to be appreciated by an audience, containing multiple values such as utility value, economic value, educational value, social value, historical value, and aesthetic value. Beyond emphasizing utility or practical function, contemporary craft art products are now created based on the encouragement of craft artists to produce works that are more expressive. Craft art, often referred to as handicrafts, can also be interpreted as skilled handiwork. In general, craft art works available on the market today serve several functions: (1) as decorations to adorn spaces (e.g., masks, carvings, decorative ceramics, miniatures); (2) as applied (functional) objects (e.g., chairs, tables, kitchen furniture); and (3) as toys (e.g., spinning tops, yo-yos, puppets, dolls).






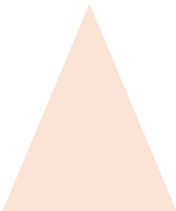
Incorporating art education curricula within universities like a state university in Jakarta, Indonesia, involves systematic learning in documenting, transforming, and reinterpreting cultural heritage by means of modern artistic languages (Putra et al., 2022; Hasan & Wijayanti, 2021; Effendy, 2019). The process includes lessons in textile crafting, drawing, and culture to enable the students to examine and interpret intangible cultural heritage through visual arts, which would be tangible and transportable (Sefmiwati, 2016; Rondhi, 2002). In addition, art education facilitates cultural identity thinking among the learners, prompting them to think critically about why certain cultures disappear and how artists can engage with the processes of cultural erasure (Bastomi, 2003; Freedman, 2019; Smith, 2020; Atkinson, 2021; Rolling, 2022). Therefore, creating punch needle artworks representing extinct foods is not just a creative act but a teaching approach to cultural sustainability.

## **Function Transfer Process**

The transformation of visual ideas drawn from food items into textile art pieces required two major steps – the preliminary sketch and the punch needle artwork. This can be

seen in Table 1 where the function transfer is illustrated through the use of preliminary sketch technique. First, each of the three food items, namely Deblo, Ali Agrem, and Awug was photographed. The pictures of each food item were then sketched into two dimensional figures focusing mainly on morphological traits such as shapes, texture, and color composition.

Tabel 1. Function Transfer Process Using Preliminary Sketching Techniques







Original Visual Idea	Preliminary Sketch Technique
 <p>Deblo 9:15</p>	
 <p>Ali agrem 9:19</p>	
 <p>Awug 9:19</p>	

After finalizing the sketches, the researchers proceeded to the punch needle execution stage. The steps were as follows:

1. The initial sketch was transferred onto fabric after the fabric had been reinforced with an embroidery hoop (Widangan/Bentang/Hoop/Midangan/Pemidangan/Pembidangan/Bidangan) or canvas netting.
2. For fabric reinforced with an embroidery hoop, the desired motif was drawn with a marker. Then, thread was inserted into the punch needle and pierced into the motif on the reinforced fabric until completed.
3. After step 2 was completed, the embroidery hoop was removed, and FOX glue mixed with a little water was applied evenly to the desired area of the fabric (either front or back). After the FOX glue dried, the thread—including the unused sides—was neatly cut.
4. In the final step, flannel fabric was used to assist with difficult areas, using scissors and UHU glue to secure loose threads and trim edges.

Figure 2 illustrates the process of transferring the functions to the textile surface through the use of the punch needle method. The textiles have effectively embodied the attributes of Deblo with its round form and banana leaf wrappings, the characteristics of Ali Agrem with its uneven fried look, and the features of Awug with its stacked steamed cakes. The use of textile provided an advantage not only in terms of longevity but also in terms of touch, which cannot be achieved using photography and drawings alone.

Table 2. Function Transfer Process Using the Punch Needle Technique

Original Visual Idea	Preliminary Sketch Technique
 <p>Deblo 9:15</p>	
 <p>Ali Agrem 9:19</p>	
 <p>Awug 9:19</p>	

### Implications for Art Education and Cultural Sustainability

Converting extinct traditional foods into punch needle fabric creations is very important to art education because it highlights the significance of using art education to preserve culture. While one can capture such extinct culture through writing and oral tradition, it takes art education to transform it into an object that can reach various galleries, museums, and schools to educate the public on extinct culture (Sefmiwati, 2016; Adamson, 2021; Crawford, 2020). Second, it shows that art education plays a significant role in the economic development of the community. The creation of these artifacts would have practical uses in terms of decor, would be useful in teaching students about the culture, and could earn money when sold as cultural crafts (Rondhi, 2002; Hasan & Wijayanti, 2021; Kurniawan & Susanto, 2020; Mulyani et al., 2021; Wibowo & Handayani, 2022). Third, it emphasizes the significance of inter-disciplinary art education in teaching fine arts, culinary culture,

anthropological knowledge, and cultural heritage (Freedman, 2019; Smith, 2020; Atkinson, 2021; Rolling, 2022; Effendy, 2019).

Moreover, this research contributes to the ongoing initiatives in integrating intangible cultural heritage into educational programs around the world. UNESCO (2003, 2019, 2021, 2022) has made it clear many times that education plays an indispensable role in protecting intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional cuisine. With the integration of local cuisine into the teaching program of the fine arts course at the university, a new generation of artist citizens who have cultural literacy, creative ability, and economic strength to preserve the local cuisine will be trained (Putra et al., 2022; Hasan & Wijayanti, 2021; Rahmawati, 2020; Susanti & Nugroho, 2019). Punch needle technique is especially appropriate for classroom practice because it is relatively cheap and accessible (Bastomi, 2003; Sefmiwati, 2016).

## **CONCLUSION**

This research paper shows that there are some extinct traditional dishes of West Java, including Deblo, Ali Agrem, and Awug, which can be converted into textile craft artworks by applying the punch needle method. There are many aspects of these artworks, including type, shape, purpose, advantages, topic, structure, attributes, components, materials, additives, tools, methods, strengths, and weaknesses, which have great significance for human beings. According to Sefmiwati (2016), these artworks are human inventions and have visual elements. They are made with certain materials and techniques by the hands of humans and have economic value.

More significantly, the study proves that the role played by art education in preserving culture cannot be ignored. Through the Fine Arts Education Study Program offered by University of State Jakarta, which uses curriculums that incorporate the local culture heritage together with modern arts craftsmanship, students gain knowledge and insights on how to document and revive cultures that are at risk of being forgotten. Art education not only serves as a means of creating beautiful objects but can also be viewed as an effective tool for building resilient cultures, inter-cultural communication, and creative economies. Through art education, future artists will learn to convert intangible cultures into concrete art pieces.

It is therefore proposed by the researchers that the art education curriculum in all Indonesian institutions includes modules about cultural documentation and preservation in the form of craft practices such as punch needle. University collaborations must be developed with culinary heritage institutions, museums, and local communities for joint initiatives on preserving the cultural heritage of Indonesia. Further research must focus on investigating the

effects of such educational practices on the students' attitudes toward culture, as well as the potential of culturally inspired textile practices.

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