



Regeneration Crisis Of Weaver Craftsmanships In Troso Village

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Abstract

Troso weaving is a local Indonesian cultural heritage with high aesthetic and historical value and is an integral part of the social, cultural, and economic life of the people of Troso Village. However, this tradition faces challenges in the form of a crisis of artisan regeneration. The purpose of the study is to explain the factors that cause the low interest of the community in becoming Troso weaving craftsmen and the impact that occurs. The research method used is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. The subject of this research is Troso weaving artisans. The researcher used the rational choice theory by James S. Coleman to analyze the problems in this study. The results of the study show that the factors that cause this regeneration crisis are the emergence of other job alternatives, changes in the mindset of the younger generation, lack of family support, and the need for high skills. The impact of this crisis includes a decrease in the number of skilled workers and the threat of extinction of the Troso weaving tradition. Utilizing the findings in this study, a strategy is needed to create a balance between preserving traditions and meeting the needs of the economy and the development of the times.

Keyword : *Crisis, Community, Regeneration, Troso Weaving, Tradition*

INTRODUCTION

Troso weaving is one of Indonesia's local cultural heritages with high aesthetic and historical value. Troso weaving has been known for hundreds of years and has become an important part of people's lives in Troso Village, Pecangaan District, Jepara Regency. Troso weaving is not only a textile product but also a cultural heritage that reflects local identity. One of the specialties of Troso weaving lies in the manufacturing process, which still uses a non-machine loom (ATBM). Troso weaving displays handicrafts that are rich in detail and show the skills of artisans that have been passed down from generation to generation. This weaving process is not only a livelihood but also an expression of a strong cultural identity for the people of Troso Village. The village's social, cultural, and economic life is closely related to the continuation of the Troso weaving tradition.

However, in recent decades, the weaving tradition in Troso Village has experienced significant challenges related to the regeneration of artisans. The existence of a regeneration crisis arises in line with the declining interest of the community, especially the younger generation, to continue the profession of weaving artisans. Many factors can affect this phenomenon, ranging from technological developments and changes in work preferences to the entry of garment factories. According to (Afriyanto & Wijaya, 2024), about the entry of garment factories, the position of the factory should play a role in encouraging other sectors to develop; in this condition, the existence of the factory has the opposite effect, namely, the influence on the sustainability of weaving artisans in Troso Village. Garment factories often offer higher-paying jobs compared to jobs in the traditional craft sector. This certainly invites some Troso weavers to abandon their traditional practices and turn to garment factories to make a living.

In the 1960s, weaving became a hereditary tradition carried out by most of the people of Troso Village (Alamsyah, 2014). In 2017, there were around 6,000 weaving artisans in Troso Village (Setiawan, 2017). Until 2022, according to data from the local village apparatus, there are around 440 weaving artisans in Troso Village out of around 22,432 residents of Troso Village. This comparison illustrates that the dominance of other sectors such as the garment industry increasingly erodes the lack of public interest or involvement in traditional weaving. This condition raises concerns about the

sustainability of Troso weaving cultural heritage, which has been an important identity and source of livelihood for the local community.

Several community leaders in Troso Village explained that the number of weavers in Troso Village is currently experiencing ups and downs because some people have switched to the garment industry, so weavers are dominated by the older generation (Nurfaizah, 2023; Setiawan 2017). This is supported by statements from (Rosita et al., 2021; Suliyanto et al., 2016) if the decline in the interest of the younger generation to become traditional artisans occurs due to uncertain income, so they tend to choose to work in other sectors. In fact, weaving can provide a decent income if it is pursued and done carefully (Putri, 2020). In addition, there is often an assumption that weaving is only suitable for married parents (Fatmawati, 2023). This condition can undoubtedly influence the preservation of weaving traditions in Troso Village, a valuable local cultural wisdom.

Weaving today seems to have undergone decay, stagnation, and even extinction (Anisah & Na'am, 2021; Triyanto et al., 2017). The sustainability of culture certainly requires the role of society, especially the younger generation for their productive age and ability to develop a business (Suryowati & Sukerna, 2022). In addition, the younger generation is also considered to be able to determine whether a culture is still preserved or extinct (Nur Bintari & Darmawan, 2016; Zulfa and Wijaya, 2020).

Previous research has examined the factors related to the declining public interest in the traditional craft sector, where one of the causes is the imperfect socialization process. From a sociological perspective, this condition shows that there are obstacles in the process of socializing cultural values and skills in the traditional craft sector to the younger generation. The imperfect process of inheritance of traditions reflects the lack of appeal of traditional arts and crafts amid social and economic changes that have hit the local community (Saidah, 2017). The decrease in the number of weaving artisans in Troso Village can be seen as part of a broader phenomenon at the national level. Based on (Pramiswara & Mardika, 2022), the regeneration of weaving artisans in Bali also faces similar challenges, including the low interest of the younger generation. Although this phenomenon may occur nationally, this study focuses on

The case of Troso weaving to delve deeper into the local factors that affect the regeneration of weaving artisans in Troso Village.

This study aims to explain the factors that cause the low interest of the community in becoming Troso weaving artisans. Coleman's rational choice theory will be used as an analysis tool to answer the purpose of the research. This theory helps explain how individuals make decisions based on rational calculations of the advantages and disadvantages of each choice. Coleman's opinion on this theory refers to every actor who has the purpose or intention of the action carried out (Wirawan, 2014). Coleman mentions that actors and resources are the two main elements in his theory (Ritzer, 2019). Through this perspective, it can be seen how society as an 'actor' considers the 'resources' that they have or want, such as income, job stability, or career opportunities in making decisions to be involved or not to be involved in the profession as weavers. Thus, this study will analyze how the community, especially the younger generation, weighs various factors influencing their decision not to continue the profession as weavers.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. The research took place in Troso Village, Pecangaan District, Jepara Regency because it is well known as one of the weaving production centers. The research was conducted from July to August 2024. In this study, the method of finding sources was carried out by *purposive sampling* with the criteria of sources determined based on their roles and experiences in weaving, position or role in weaving, age, and sustainability of the weaving craftsman profession in the family.

Table 1 Number and Types of Informants

Types of Informants	Work	Sum
Lead Informant	Active Weaving Artisans	3
	Weaving Business Owner	2
	Weaving Craftsmen Who Switch Other Jobs	3
Supporting Informant	Youth of Troso Village	3
	Village Apparatus	1
Total		12

Source: Primary Data, 2024

There are 3 data collection techniques carried out in this study, namely observation, interviews, and documentation studies. First, observation where the aspects observed are the activities of weaving artisans in Troso Village, the process of making Troso weaving, Troso looms, and the types of Troso weaving. Second, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the main informants and supporters based on questions focused on the problems in this study. In the first interview with the weavers, the data collected included personal experiences in weaving, changes in the number of artisans over time, the challenges they faced, and their views on the regeneration and sustainability of Troso weaving. The second interview was with business unit owners, where the researcher also needed their views on labor regeneration. The third interview was with weavers who switched jobs to find out why they changed their profession. The fourth interview was conducted with the younger generation to understand their perception of this work and provide an overview of the interests and obstacles in continuing the weaving tradition. The fifth interview was with the local village officials to determine the policies and training programs supporting Troso weaving. Third, the researcher conducted a documentation study by documenting various aspects of Troso weaving production and analyzing relevant previous research results.

The data analysis technique used in this study follows the interactive analysis model from Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana (2014), which includes three stages. The first stage is data reduction by filtering information and setting aside less relevant data to this problem, such as general stories about the history of Troso weaving and focusing on data on factors that affect people's decisions about the profession of weaving artisans. The second stage is the presentation of data in tables that show the relationship between the education of the younger generation, economic conditions, and interest in weaving. In addition, the researcher also compiled a matrix describing the difficulties of weavers in finding young workers and a table detailing the reasons expressed by the younger generation about their disinterest in the weaving profession. The third stage is data verification, which is carried out by identifying how an individual's decision not to continue the profession as a weaver is based on rational considerations and analyzing the impact of the decision.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Cause of the Low Interest of the Community in Becoming Troso Weaving Craftsmen

Troso weaving is one of Jepara's cultural heritages. This woven fabric is known for its distinctive motifs and intricate craftsmanship techniques, so it has high economic and aesthetic value. However, in today's era, Troso weaving faces sustainability challenges due to the declining number of artisans and the community's interest, especially the younger generation. The majority of workers in this sector are the older generation due to limited access to other jobs and specific skills. The inheritance of traditional knowledge that has been carried out from generation to generation is increasingly hampered by the low interest of the community, especially the younger generation.

One of the important aspects in maintaining the sustainability of Troso weaving in the future is the knowledge and skills that the younger generation must have for this tradition. Of course, these knowledge and skills are not just acquired. It is learned through involvement and the learning process of weaving activities. However, in today's era, weaving artisans have been dominated by the older generation, and there are rarely young generations involved in a Troso weaving production business, if there is even a small part. This condition is inseparable from various factors affecting individual decisions about this profession.

First, there are other job alternatives. The existence of other job alternatives that are considered more promising is one of the main reasons for the decline in the interest of the younger generation to continue the profession as Troso weaving craftsmen. Based on Coleman's rational choice theory, individual decisions in choosing a job are influenced by rational calculations and are inseparable from the resources owned. Resources such as education level play an important role in supporting an individual's decision to seek a job that is considered more lucrative. The younger generation who has taken formal education, especially junior high or high school graduates, have more access to jobs outside traditional professions such as weaving. In the modern era, increasing awareness of the importance of education makes the younger generation more critical in choosing a job (Susilowati, 2016). Advances in technology and education open up opportunities for the younger generation to pursue careers in

more diverse fields, such as the creative industry, information technology, and office work, compared to the profession of weaving artisans. In addition, the existence of jobs in the garment industry sector also provides more attractive options for the community, especially the younger generation. Jobs in garment factories that only require junior high school graduates or equivalent are attractive because they offer a stable income.

This condition is also in line with the statement from (Ode et al., 2024), which states that the difficulty of regeneration experienced by some weavers is due to the lack of interest of the younger generation to continue the weaving tradition, and they tend to choose other jobs that are considered more profitable. Jobs that are usually chosen are factory workers, store employees, traders, or even office employees if they meet the required qualifications. The many other job alternatives provide greater attraction for the younger generation. As a result, the regeneration of Troso weaving artisans has become increasingly hampered due to a lack of interest in continuing the tradition.

Second, a change in the mindset of the younger generation. In recent years, weaving work has been considered to provide less well-being and social prestige. In modern society, jobs that do not require higher education such as weaving are often considered less valuable than formal jobs in the industrial or service sectors. This view affects how the younger generation assesses the weaving profession. They tend to associate the job with low social status, thus losing motivation to continue it. This condition is in line with the statement from (Astriawan, et al., 2021) about the assumption from the community regarding traditional arts as something ancient, causing a decrease in the motivation of the younger generation to continue to actively participate in the preservation of the art. This view of the community encourages the younger generation to choose other types of jobs that are considered capable of improving their identity and providing social recognition for having a decent job.

The change in the mindset of the younger generation towards the profession of weaving artisans is not only based on individual considerations but is also influenced by the norms, values, and expectations of society. With the view of weaving as a less relevant job in the modern era, the younger generation tends to choose other jobs that are considered capable of providing welfare and social recognition. In Coleman's rational choice theory, these decisions reflect how individuals adapt their choices to changes in social norms and opportunities that exist in society.

Third, lack of family support. On the other hand, some parents also tend to free their children to choose the job they want. There is an assumption that forcing children to continue working as weaving artisans is inappropriate because there are more promising jobs out there. Some families encourage their children to find work in the formal or modern sector, so interest in weaving does not grow. This condition is certainly what affects the number of weaving artisans from the younger generation, which is starting to decrease. Many families view the work of weavers as irrelevant to the demands of the times, so they indirectly distance their children from this tradition. In Coleman's theory, the family is part of the social structure that influences individual choices. When parents do not support their children becoming weavers, they indirectly introduce social values that lead to a rejection of these traditional skills. Coleman explained that individual actions are the result of rational calculations. In this case, the rational calculation of the younger generation is more inclined towards more valued job choices which provide more financial benefits and that are in line with their family's expectations.

Fourth, there is a need for high skills. In terms of weaving, of course, it requires special skills that not everyone can master. In addition, it takes precision, patience, and long practice to produce high-quality fabrics. Weaving is the same as making batik, where batik making requires skill because each batik motif has its own meaning and requires patience and precision to produce high-quality batik (Martuti et al., 2019; Putri, E. H. 2020). This condition is in line with the way people weave in weaving. Thus, one of the challenges and obstacles that makes people, especially the younger generation, reluctant to learn weaving is because the production process is quite complicated, requires precision, and requires a long practice to get used to the production process.

According to information from one of the informants, the younger generation tends to choose easy jobs, provide quick results, and have minimal risk compared to weaving, which requires patience, special skills, and significant capital for independent businesses. Even though intricate details are part of the uniqueness of a weaving technique, the more complicated the manufacturing process and weaving motifs, the higher the aesthetic and economic value (Ratnasari, 2023).

For the younger generation, this high skill is often considered an obstacle. In Coleman's rational choice theory approach, they see the demands of these skills as a cost to bear, preferring other jobs that are easier to master and provide quick results. Some younger generations are more interested in becoming a distributor of woven products through the *online* market rather than being directly involved in the production process. This shows a shift in value from mastering traditional skills to a more modern business orientation. With Coleman's rational choice theory approach, the younger generation calculates that weaving brings them less profit. The long process makes this profession no longer attractive, especially when other jobs are lighter and provide immediate income. As a result, the regeneration of Troso weavers continues to decrease, even though this tradition has high cultural and economic value.

Coleman explains that rational action is based on the view that individuals not only act with a specific purpose but also choose actions that provide benefits and advantages to meet their needs (Wirawan, 2014). Therefore, this study shows that society, especially the younger generation as actors, not only acts with a specific goal but also considers the benefits for them. If they choose to continue working as weavers, people feel that the work does not provide them with benefits, both economically and socially. From the economic side, this is related to income. Meanwhile, from the social side, there is a negative view or sneer from the community towards the work as a weaver.

The Impact of Low Public Interest in Becoming Troso Weaving Craftsmen

Woven fabrics are part of an area that is considered a cultural *landscape*, such as communities that produce and preserve traditional woven fabrics. In this case, woven fabrics can serve as a symbol of cultural preservation and have an important role in shaping the identity of the community (Amelia et al., 2023). However, with the decrease in the interest of the community, especially the younger generation, in the profession of weaving artisans in Troso Village, it has become a serious challenge to preserve local cultural heritage. This phenomenon not only threatens the sustainability of the weaving tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation but can also impact the lives of the people of Troso Village.

First, declining production and quality. One of the major challenges in the sustainability of the Troso weaving tradition is the decline in the number of skilled artisans which directly impacts the production and quality of fabrics. To keep up with market developments and remain in demand, Troso weaving motifs need to be updated from time to time. However, nowadays, many weavers face difficulties in finding employees because most prefer to work in other sectors. According to information from one of the weaving business owners, the limited number of employees hampered production, so orders from outside the region were forced to be rejected.

From a sociological perspective, this condition can be explained through Coleman's rational choice theory, where individual decisions are based on the calculation of the benefits and costs faced. The younger generation calculates that the time and energy required to become a skilled craftsman do not provide equal rewards, so they prefer to work in other sectors. The lack of skilled labor has caused the production capacity of Troso weaving to decrease. In a sociological approach, this happens because more and more people, especially the younger generation, prefer other jobs that are considered more profitable and provide quick results. Without a new workforce, the ability to fulfill large orders has been limited.

As the skilled workforce becomes fewer, the overall volume of weaving production decreases. The remaining weavers are often those who are older or experienced, but they can no longer transfer skills effectively to the younger generation due to a lack of interest. This leads to a slower weaving production process and a lack of innovation in design, which impacts the product's quality. In rational choice theory, quality is one of the aspects that individuals calculate based on whether they get a reward commensurate with the effort spent. If the rewards obtained from weaving production are considered to be disproportionate to the effort required to maintain quality, then individuals are likely to choose not to continue this tradition.

Second, the threat of extinction of the Troso weaving tradition. The lack of regeneration of artisans can lead to the loss of weaving skills that have been passed down from generation to generation. This condition can also result in traditional motifs and techniques unique to Troso weaving at risk of being forgotten, thus threatening its existence as a cultural heritage. In an interview with one of the senior artisans, he stated that if the younger generation is reluctant to learn weaving, of course, it can raise

concerns about the sustainability of this tradition. Without regeneration, the sustainability of weaving crafts is threatened when senior artisans have stopped working.

If this tradition is lost, of course, it will not only be culturally detrimental, but it can also erase the characteristics of Troso Village as one of the centers of Indonesian weaving crafts. Without conservation efforts, future generations may no longer know the richness of local art and wisdom in every piece of Troso woven fabric. In addition, this threat can also have an impact on the potential of the local economy. If the weaving tradition becomes extinct, Troso Village will lose one of its primary sources of income. The artisans who depend on this industry will lose their livelihoods. The Troso weaving tradition is not just a job but also part of the cultural identity of the people of Troso Village. If this profession is not continued, the local cultural identity inherent in Troso weaving will undoubtedly be lost.

The preservation of the existence of traditional crafts requires the role of the younger generation, too. With more in-depth teaching about the meaning and role of a tradition, the younger generation will better understand the importance of maintaining and inheriting the tradition (Asbihani & Jalil, 2017). In the context of rational choice, the loss of interest in this profession is the result of a change in social values, where the younger generation prefers social status and greater economic benefits to preserving traditions that require commitment and hard work. The Troso weaving tradition's extinction threat is the impact of rational individual decisions. The decision led to a disconnect in the regeneration of artisans and the loss of skill transfer.

CONCLUSION

This research contributes to the application of Coleman's rational choice theory in understanding social phenomena, especially the crisis of regeneration of weaving artisans in Troso Village. The findings in this study show that an individual's decision not to pursue a profession as a weaver is based on a rational calculation of benefits and costs by considering economic, social, and cultural factors. First, the younger generation, as an actor in Coleman's theory, stated that the benefits of other jobs tend to be more significant, such as income stability and social recognition, compared to the

profession of weavers, who are considered to have less commensurate rewards and skill demands. Second, this study confirms that individual choices are not only economical but also influenced by social values and expectations. The lack of family support and the view of society that considers weaving as a less prestigious job reinforces the individual's decision to abandon this tradition. Third, the impact of individual decisions is a decrease in the regeneration of artisans, which impacts the threat of extinction of the Troso weaving tradition. The condition has shown how the rational actions of individuals can affect the overall social structure.

This research has important social, cultural, and economic relevance because this regeneration crisis can not only harm local culture but also threaten the economic sustainability of villages that depend on Troso weaving. Therefore, concrete steps such as increasing training and education, product innovation, and financial support are needed to encourage the community, especially the younger generation, to return to preserving the weaving tradition. Further research is needed to evaluate government policies supporting the preservation of traditional crafts and to find out the right efforts to preserve Troso weaving in order to encourage cultural sustainability while improving the economy of the village community.

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