

# The Innovation of Tuban's Traditional Cloth through The Involvement of Fashion Designer's Role

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**Abstract.** Tuban area at East Java, Indonesia, has a tradition in making traditional cloth shaped batik and woven cloth. Cloth has visual's good individuality, meaning, and also function that distinguish it with traditional cloths from other region in Indonesia. Functionally, these traditional cloths is besides used as customary cloth, and by a large part society of Tuban is left behind because it is assumed as an old-fashioned tradition. Society's interest's depreciation's existence at Tuban in using traditional cloth surely affects towards the degradation of tradition in making cloths at Tuban. After passing through various design's experiment, there has been done the development in special traditional cloth's function of Tuban in which involves the role of fashion designer. This matter is done with a deliberation that in the effort watch over tradition's existence, world fashion has an enough strategic character because it can give impact towards the increasing of society's appreciation to traditional batik's cloth. The result of this watchfulness finds patterns of creating a fashion designer to create an appropriate product with trend by taking an inspiration from a certain tradition. Besides, indirectly, the height society's appreciation can contribute to give a chance for tradition stands hold-in.

**Keywords:** batik, fashion designer, innovation, tradition, Tuban,

## 1 Introduction

As formerly in Indonesia, in ancient Javanese at Kediri Kingdom period, there was a cloth making tradition that has done by particular people. According to Dwiyanto in Nastiti, during the period were found workers who expert in making various goods made from textile's basic commodity, that is called *manapus*, that is thread's maker's worker, cloth, plait, and umbrella [1]. Until nowsome of the skills of making the tradisional cloths still can be found found at several regions in indonesia, one of them is Tuban, East Java.

Tuban area has very long tradition in cloth making, that is weave using weaver toll named *gedog* and decorating it with the motive batik's technique. The activity of making batik and weaving is the interlude's activity that is done by women when they are not farming. They usually go to the farm to arable the land from morning up to afternoon, so that making batik and weaving done at night or at moment when they do not have to go to

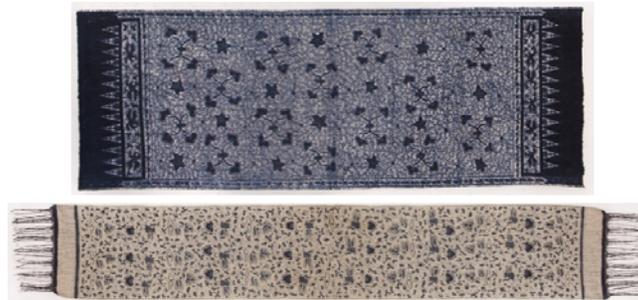
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arable the land due to waiting time planting dry season's consequence or new finished harvest.

Both batik's cloth and *gedog* textile are not only merely a sheet of usual cloth, but has also values in philosophical rank that provides to how a cloth for society can has function and meaning deeply so they are able to cling in everyday's society as an established tradition form. These cloths are created by Tuban society which has the characteristics aloof according to visual, that is inclined that has impression likes" primitive cloth". The coarsed texture, the fabric structure scraggly, the colour in the batik inclined dull because coloured with natural dye, also lined-scoop cantingan in the motive even also far from neat impression. But matter that's exactly what makes it different from batiks of other region.

The special design of batik *gedog* cloth of Tuban society based on explanation made to accustom towards to the cloth's function, that is as *sayut* cloth (long square's formed cloth of the size wide between 100 cm up to 110 cm and length achieves 250 cm [2]. cloth *jarit* worn by woman limit of ankle by wrapped to organ from left direction to right and usually augmenting with folds at part in front of it). Besides the cloth is also used as *sayut* (as cloth that has wide size that is around 60 cm and long achieve 300 cm by enlacing to the shoulder then coiling it to waist's part. This cloth's function is as means of to help to carry goods every day).



**Fig 1.** *Jarit* Cloth's Design (top) and *Sayut* Cloth (bottom) Tuban's Special Society

Even in batik's visual also appears that compatibility's existence between *mancapat* Javanese philosophy concept which is adapted in colours in special traditional Tuban batik's cloth. Based on explanation [3], eastside is represented by white colour, or called *putihan* that symbolize birth, southern is represented by ruddled or called *bangrod* that symbolizes women's maturity sexuality, then north-side represented by black colour or called also *irengan* that symbolize death. This concept also creates Tuban's special traditional cloth is used in customary ceremony's activities and certain ritual.

Nowadays *gedog* batik cloth wearing habit begin to be forgotten by the society due the lack of complete understanding on the values within cloth using tradition. Complete comprehension on cloth leftover more and more because of the custom's ceremony activities and ritual are not considered relevant anymore by Tuban society. So, the mentioned above indirectly gives impact towards to transpiration of tradition cloth at Tuban. The worker that still want to do cloth become less than before caused by the low request of the cloths.

Based on the condition, it is necessary to do an innovative strategy as one of the efforts increases to return cloths' existence, one of them can with involve the role of fashion designer. But, the necessity efforts which need to be done must use the correct methodology so that tradition's identity's values in cloth can be permanently taken care.

## 2 Literature Review

The Tuban special traditional cloth's maker's process is started with cotton's spinning activity, weaving by using *gedog* textile, and making batik with batik's writing technique. These entire process's series are important stage in order to create a sheet of cloth that represent Tuban tradition

### 2.1 The Making Process of Tuban's Special Traditional Cloth

According to Achjadi and Natanegara spinning is one of the important process in cloth making [4]. The process of spinning in principle begins with forming cotton's fiber becomes long thread sheet which is not cut off. For Tuban's society, this spinning process is done by using simple tangled tool's aid usually they mention with the name *jontra*. The shape of the tool is as a levered lever wheel with a few other important components usually made of wood, and to move it still thoroughly using human's hand.

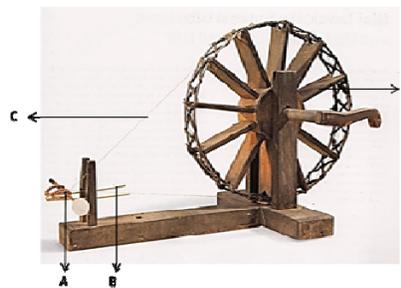


Fig 2. Spinning tool *jontra* to spins cotton Becomes Thread [5]

Picture's explanation (figure 2):

- a: *kisi* is spool to produce thread's spool in wood stick or bamboo
- b: *uping-uping* is two wood/bamboo stick to hold back grid on horizontal position
- c: *klinden* is thread from grid's spool that pulled to aim twiddling's wheel
- d: roll's wheel *jantra* which moved by hand to gather thread

The spinning tool likes this consist of two main component, there are spinner that called *jantra* and the spool which is called *kisi*. This cotton's spinning-mill's result tukul that is cotton's spool that used in the next process as *lungsi* (vertical direction's thread) and woof (direction's thread's horizontal) in textile's plait's structure.

While for weaver's model *gedog* that used by Tuban society according to Gillow, is a kind of back-strap body-tension loom that is weaver that has isolator's string at backside that functioned for the convergent weaver's body [6]. This weaver has simple mechanism, without frame, and the important element consists of breast beam or flank in local language that is a wood's beam to put correctly below the breast; and warp beam or in local language is called *gebheg* that be wood's beam to put thread's spool *lungsi*; one another related with thread's tie *lungsi*. Then found a back-strap or back for the convergent made's weaver's body from wood or skin that fastened to flank.

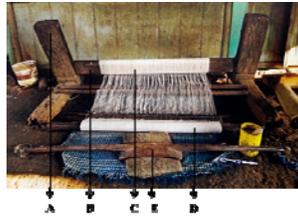


Fig 3. Front textile *gedog* appear face (source: Achjadi and Natanegara, 2010)

Picture's explanation:

- a: *kemplong* is a vertical wood that functioned for isolator *gebeg*
- b: *gebheg* is a horizontal wood that functioned to roll *lungsi* thread
- c: *lungsi* thread is thread with vertical direction that rolls in *gebheg*
- d: *apit* is a wood to roll woven cloth
- e: *por* is medium for weaver leaning to waist's part

Weavers sit in a position with one leg stretched forward to floor or soil while leaning on and foot-holding the body in back's wood. The position like this also functioned to watch over *lungsi* thread permanently stretches tight with strains matching with the one which need. Weavers usually regulate the body's position with once in a while improve the body forwards to tighten or loosen thread appropriate need. Weaver *gedog* this not has permanent, so that usually lied above floor and or moved [4].

*Gedog* textile's structure's principle equals to fabric in general that is with principle of artless fabric that is the simplest fabric kind. According to Bittner, in simple weaving found two thread's kinds that is *lungsi* (vertical thread) and woof (thread's horizontal) mutual intercrossing to form tissue [7]

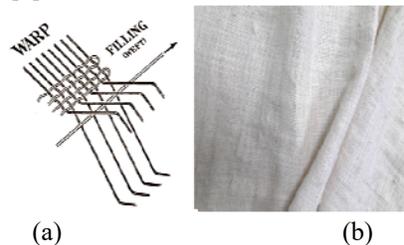


Fig 4. *lungsi* thread's tissue's pattern (warp) and woof (weft) in artless fabric kind (a), textile's cloth's copy *gedog* with artless fabric structure (b) (source: textile committee, 2002 [8] author, 2016 [b]).

## 2.2 Fashion Designer: Lulu Lutfi Labibi

Fashion designer Lulu Lutfi Labibi was graduated from diploma of Tekstil Institut Seni Indonesia (ISI) Yogyakarta and has good reputation. This matter can be seen from total followers in his instagram account, up to January 2017 it almost achieves 100.000 people.

The designs that are created by Lulu Lutfi Labibi has characteristics and strong line plans with a rich eccentric classical touch with ethnical touch that is thick towards Javanese impression. Impression that evoked in the stakes more many evoke the gloomy ambience with dark colours that is dominated by black monochrome, white and a bit brown, although once in a while lulu lutfi labibi also fuse the design with contrast colour like red and blue. Besides Lulu Lutfi Labibi also consistently uses traditional cloths, like lurik and batik with draping technique (coil around, fold and sew cloth).



Fig 5. Fashion by Lulu Lutfi Labibi (source: [instagram.com/lululutfilabibi/](https://www.instagram.com/lululutfilabibi/))

In every Lulu Lutfi Labibi's design there are always the thick's themes with tradisional Javanese nuance, like: 'Petruk jadi supermodel' (2015), 'Gendangsari Berlari' (2016) and 'Tirakat' (2017). In the collection Lulu Lutfi Labibi make clothing that is not only as fashion product, but also contains art expression from Lulu Lutfi Labibi herself. The designer desainer proves that she is able to set the market to make her own trend.

### 3 Methodology

Before the process of design innovation's with fashion designer's involvement is done, it is necessary to understand the background elements of batik cloth creation and *gedog* textile as reference's source by doing data collecting's techniques, as follows:

- Literature study such as data collecting sourced from scientific journal, article, reference's books that discuss about tradition and Tuban's traditional cloth (author: Rens Heringa and Gamble Knight Acjhadi), researcher's individual note, and visual's materials of photos, sketches, and product's pictures.
- Direct observation at field, to detect how interaction's patterns that in workers with cloth's maker's process and the cloth produced, to realize how traditional cloth's position at society in this time. The location of observation is the center of making batik and *gedog* weaving at Tuban, precisely at pulley's district widespread at 4 villages, those are: Kedungrejo, Margorejo, Gaji, and Karanglo.
- Interviews to get clearer explanation and detail about a certain thing to some people who are assumed has expertise and erudition towards watchfulness subject that being canvassed, they are: Kasubbid Perindakop Bappeda Regency of Tuban - Suwanto, author and researcher about tuban - N. A Natanegara, and fashion designer - Lulu Lutfi Labibi.
- Experimentats, that means giving design concept towards traditional cloth's condition and do various effort so that producing a design's innovation that assumed the most optimal with aesthetical enhancement in traditional artefact. This experiment's process will be done by involving the designer fashion role that chosen based on several criteria.

### 4 Result and Discussion

Experiment's assignment to fashion designer to apply cloth development becomes clothing product is necessary to be done by deciding several rules first, among others:

- The designer has good reputation and influential. The designer has original work and uneasy to be dictated by market. On the contrary, the designer is able to drive market's taste to trend and style which he/she created. Thereby, the designer has many followers whom follow him/her,
- At least, the designer has started the profession of designing during two years and has strong and consistent character,
- The designer is inspired and working at what has been an inspiration of Indonesian archipelago's tradition, and it can be looking-glass-mirrored from the use of materials' as certain local tradition's product, or the idea and work's theme of it is inspired by certain

local tradition's values, or optimizing the local worker's character in creating the design's products,

– The designer has educational background in fashion design sector, so that in every design's deliberation which is taken it's supported by knowledge reference and not only caused by intuition and individual taste.

Based on entire criteria that have been persistently decided, there is the designer named Lulu Lutfi Labibi chosen. This designer will create an innovation of traditional cloth becomes fashion product which has additional value to the functional aspect, economical, visual, also hierarchy level, since at the beginning the it is the cloth which is especially used by Tuban people to the daily needs, than it become the cloth which has a highly-prestigious value.

In the effort of watching-over tradition's existence, fashion sector has enough strategic role. By developing it into the fashion product by the designers, it will have the impact to the increasing of people appreciation to batik cloth and *gedog* weaving caused by the influence which is given by the fashion designer whom able to create trend/style then it will also create the huge enough follower groups.

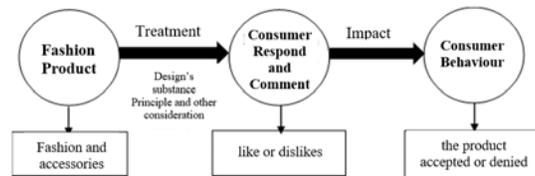


Fig. 6. The role of designer in giving the design treatment to fashion product to form the consumer behavior

Of all this process there are design considerations lie on the designer's subjective authority. The considerations based on the academic background of the designer itself to the fashion design territory which he/she has had from the formal education, also the experience in doing the profession as fashion designer in accordance of forming the special identity and characteristic. These consideration cover: enrichment, supported-usage and material, technical, theme, and concept embellishment. Besides, it is also needed to pay attention the general considerations, such as: aesthetic (the principle and substance of design), consumer's trend and taste, functionality and ergonomic element, also the secure of the product to the user.

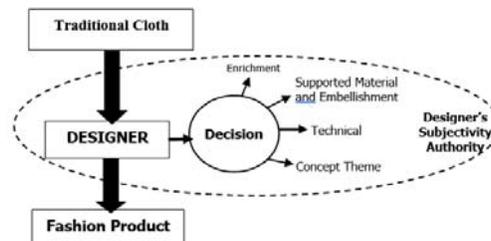


Fig. 7. The process of fashion designing stake by the designer

“*Hulu ke Hilir*” is a collection which is dedicated to traditional cloth at Tuban. Here is a remembrance for us to appreciate the process. The *hulu* describes a process that is done by the people of Tuban who are usually planting the tree of cotton by themselves, then it is span to be counters of textiles. Next, *hilir* is shown as the process where the threads of spinning are woven to be counters of cloths and ready to be batiks. By the cloths the people of Tuban wear this special product or sell them to the other people.

Processing Tuban cloth which still has the very traditional characteristic in weaving by the weaver tool called *gedog* certainly has its own story. The cloths visually look older, so it makes them have the stronger character than the other traditional cloths that come from the other regions of Indonesia. By looking at the physical Tuban cloth which is simple, it makes me the same existence of Japanese aesthetical theory *Wabi-Sabi*. So, to make it to be real as a clothing fashion and still defense the characteristic which is applied, it is the challenge itself. The designer has to fully watch carefully the importance of giving the spirit to the clothing which is produced, but the designer also is able to make it balance in order that it has the synergy with the developing of the era.

I choose the segment for the people who will wear the clothes, those are for mature women who have passes a long and many experience during their lives, so at the end they can artificially get the meaning of luxurious by the other angles. That the luxurious for them now becomes a thing which is simple or more than that. This way of seeing things is also my effort to show every clothing photos in this collection. The models visualize the clothing without any make-up with the long hair on the loose, so it will remind us to the past country ladies. In this modern era like this sometimes the yearning of simple thing becomes more and more. So, let's just begin to campaign in many occasion the things that are organic.

Draping technique is still the choice in creative process to create the clothing this moment, because it also makes the original design keep in origin and it is not supposedly guessed, while the technic is also very wise in treating the cloth. By using this technic, there will not be too many clipping and cutting process of the material so there shall not be too many wasted cloth. Finally, there will exist a collection with a strong impression that means a beauty often created precisely from the imperfect thing, the thing that we even never we think before at all.”



Fig. 8. Left-right: Cloth Design #1 and #2 by Lulu Lutfi Labibi



Fig. 9. Cloth Design #3 by Lulu Lutfi Labibi

## 5 Conclusion

The conclusion based on the applied experiment in Tuban' s special traditional cloth which becomes fashion product that involves the designer Lulu Lutfi Labibi, is the success of having the innovation, than try to compare with the last condition, covers:

- In the function of cloth's aspect experiences enhanced level than previous enhancement with the condition that there is not only the function it as *sayut* dan *jarit*, but it has inability become raw material only functioned as *sayut* and *jarit*, instead of it has been able to be for producing to be applied at ready fashion product with certain enrichment,
- At the aspect of developing result *gedog* woven cloth's user has the occupancy from industry/stakeholder which is represented by the designer Lulu Lutfi Labibi,
- At the aspect of hierarchy the *gedog* woven cloth increases by changing the value and meaning of which has philosophical substance becomes value and meaning with prestigious substance at the modern social order of society level. The matter of it can happen due to the support of the increasing of aesthetic aspect, so that it can push the designer interest of Lulu Lutfi Labibi to raise it to one of the clothing collection. It means that the thing indirectly put the *gedog* woven cloth up to level of middle-upper market segmentation.

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