



# Transformation of the Lancang Kocik Folk Song Symbol of the Sakai Tribe for the Creative Industry as an Effort for Sustainable Cultural Preservation

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## ABSTRACT

*Lancang Kocik* Folk Songs (NRLK) originated among the Sakai Tribe, who live in Petani Village, Riau Province. Essentially, this song is an introduction to work and is utilized as a song of pride since it contains a natural identity, real historical proof as an indigenous Riau tribe, and is a reminder of sustainable ecology and culture. NRLK's existence, however, is no longer sustained because natural conditions have switched to corporate ownership. Automatically, changes in nature mean that the culture of the Sakai tribe, which is reflected in the NRLK, also transforms. Seeing this tendency, this study was designed to discover the transformation of NRLK from fishermen's songs to a symbol in the form of a "small canoe" design to investigate the possibilities of creative industries. As part of the attempt to conserve culture, NRLK is expected to have cultural tourism potential as a result of this transformation. The research method employed was qualitative, using a semiotic and creative industry perspective. Data was gathered in phases, including observation, recording, literature review, interviews, and documentation. The findings of this study are as follows: (1) Through analysis of symbols that are a form of NRLK transformation, it can revive the creative economy, particularly the cultural tourism sector; (2) Furthermore, through analysis of the NRLK symbol, it can be used as a typical Sakai tribe batik motif; and (3) Production of batik with the "*Lancang Kocik*" motif can be used as a souvenir or souvenir typical of the Sakai tribe when on a cultural tour to Petani Village.

**Keywords:** *Lancang Kocik, symbol transformation, creative industry, and sustainable culture*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The *Lancang Kocik* Folk Song (NRLK) emphasizes the Sakai tribe's identity as a traditional tribe that is attached to nature. For locals, nature is not merely an area to meet necessities, but it also serves as a spiritual conduit, resulting in a profound inner bond between society and nature. As a result, the establishment of NRLK demonstrates a clear regard for nature.

Basically, NRLK is used as an introductory song to work (Rangkuti, 2022). The speaker hums NRLK while rowing a canoe on the river to accompany his journey while fishing, hunting, and gathering in the forest. A unique wisdom because it still survives amid the digitalization era. These include (1) The main speaker (maestro) who is elderly; (2) Changes in natural

conditions that have been controlled by many companies have resulted in changes in people's livelihoods. For example, from fishermen turning into company workers; (3) The NRLK inheritance process has not been maximized.

According to the aforementioned situation, the existence of NRLK is under threat of extinction. To prevent extinction, change measures must be undertaken. In previous research conducted by Rangkuti (2022), NRLK took the form of an oral text composed of rhymes. To present this oral literature, it is necessary to study the practical aspects after transforming. This is based on NRLK which has not been recorded as WBTb (Intangible Cultural Heritage). Meanwhile, it is time for the NRLK to be studied in depth as an asset for the Malay community as well as a guardian of the ecology.

WBTb cannot be held (intangible/abstract), such as concepts and technologies, and its nature can change and disappear over time, such as language, music, dancing, ceremonies, and countless other organized behaviors. According to the 2003 UNESCO Convention on Safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, Intangible Cultural Heritage is divided into five domains: a) Oral traditions and expressions; b) performing arts; c) community customs, rituals, and celebrations; d) knowledge and behavioral habits regarding nature and the universe; and/or e) traditional craft skills and proficiency. Based on the definition above, NRLK is included in the Oral Tradition and Expression category.

*Lancang Kocik* is interpreted as a 'small canoe' in terms of meaning. Canoes represent a cultural identity for the Sakai people, as well as a mode of transportation. As a result, this study will look into the metamorphosis of the NRLK, which is represented by a little canoe.

The purpose of this research is to preserve the NRLK, which directly contributes to the preservation of the Sakai ethnic community's culture. Furthermore, preserving a culture not only ensures its survival but also creates a creative economic potential that can sustain community welfare based on local wisdom.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several prior studies have demonstrated that the existence of oral literature can offer new economic prospects aimed at enhancing the welfare of local communities. For example, research conducted by Pramono (2018), Suardiana (2011), Anoe-grajekti (2019), and Bahri (2023).

In the study conducted by Pramono, the oral literature used as objects were ancient texts (manuscripts) that were still intact and stored in several surau. These surau are located in West Sumatra and are usually used by the community, especially religious congregations, as pilgrimage locations. Seeing this phenomenon, researchers studied the potential that these manuscripts had and developed them as a creative industry. Through philological, codicological, and creative industry approaches, manuscripts were found containing biographies of the tarekat clerics and their teachings. This is one of the potentials for the creative industry in the publishing sector. Apart from that, researchers also utilized illumination engineering (decorative variations in manuscripts) and developed it into batik production which can be used as a typical

community souvenir when on religious tours as well as pilgrimages at suras in West Sumatra Province.

Next, the study conducted by Suardiana also used oral literary objects as a creative economic discourse. The researcher focuses on the oral literature of Satua I Cekel which has been translated into written literature under the name *Geguritan I Gedé Basur*. The analysis was carried out using structural and hermeneutic theory to produce values related to the concept of business and how to manage finances. In Bali, the concept of doing business is founded on oral literature, namely the concept of tiny money becoming large capital and the concept of saving. Balinese people have a notion known as *nyaraki*, which is the use of tiny capital for great revenue, as the expression goes: one row, two or three islands are traversed. Furthermore, the concept of saving is the next creative economic concept. This oral literature provides messages of kindness in the form of assets that must be skillfully handled, saving, thriftiness, and only purchasing what is required.

Anoe-grajekti also conducted a study on oral literature that has been converted into creative economic potential. This research was presented by the researcher in a public talk. According to experts, the changed form of oral literature is the Legend of Sri Tanjung, a folk tale at the origin of Banyuwangi. This legend was transformed into the myth of the well in Kawitan Village, used as a stage name for art performances, and the traditional drama *Janger*, and became the theme of the Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival by the Banyuwangi Regency Government in 2016. In this analysis, the emphasis is on oral literature and the *Seblang Ritual* used by the people community to introduce and market MSME products, such as culinary, batik, and Banyuwangi patterned souvenirs. Tourism partnership is carried out with this performance, such as cultural tourism, plantations, and maritime culture, which can benefit the welfare of the local population.

The last one, Bahri also researched the oral literature of the Sasak people entitled "*Mandalika*" and examined its potential as a creative economy. *Mandalika* is the name of a female character in West Nusa Tenggara Sasak folklore. *Mandalika* is a beautiful and wonderful girl among three young guys, thus they compete to marry her. *Mandalika* chose to hurl himself into the sea rather than choosing one of the young guys to prevent a battle. The name *Mandalika* has grown in popularity, having been used to name the main market or terminal, one of the famous radio stations in Central

Lombok Regency, a university, and the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (KEK). Beautiful beaches can be found in this area. It became even more popular when it was used as an international motorbike racing circuit known as the Mandalika MotoGP. This study focuses on the Mandalika tourism attraction, which serves as both a tourism icon and a location for creative businesses. Performances (theater and dance), crafts (Mandalika statue), cinematography (Mandalika animated film), and publishing (the book *Asal Muasal*) are examples of transfers. The Sasak people can leverage Mandalika's popularity as a creative economic potential through the numerous transfers mentioned above, such as t-shirts, key chains, wall decorations, knick-knacks, and so on.

### 3. METHOD

The *Lancang Kocik* Folk Song from Petani Village's Sakai tribe served as the research's data source. This study examines the song's words, the speaker's behavior as a part of the Sakai ethnic community, and the possibility of transformation caused by NRLK. To discover the alteration of symbols in the NRLK, these data were evaluated utilizing qualitative research methodologies using a semiotic and creative industry perspective.

According to Anoe-grajekti (2019), transformation is a process of gradual change until the final stage. Changes are carried out by providing both internal and external responses which will lead to previously recognized forms. Furthermore, to determine the symbol in NRLK, a semiotic approach is used as in the opinion of Charles Sander Peirce, while a 'symbol' is a sign whose relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary or conventional (Piliang, 2004:194).

Purnomo (2016:8) defines creative economy as a concept for achieving sustainable economic development through innovation. Utilization of resources that are not only renewable, but also limitless, such as ideas, thoughts, talents or talents, and idea-based creativity, which are born from the creativity of human resources (creative people) and are based on the application of information, including cultural and technological heritage.

According to Adnan (2023), sustainable culture is a notion that encompasses how culture can exist and flourish from generation to generation without hurting the environment or natural resources while also keeping important social and cultural values.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. *Lancang Kocik* Symbol Transformation

The Sakai tribe community considers NRLK a sacred song that only the speaker (maestro) has the right to sing in front of people outside the local tribe. For this reason, people in general will always admit that they are "embarrassed" to sing the song, and then ask that the speaker sing it. In this research, the speaker's name is Dariyat and he serves as Head of the Arts and Culture Division in the management of the Sakai Bomban Petani Tribe, in Bathin Solapan Sub District.

According to the NRLK text, the song depicts a small wooden canoe, which is regarded as a distinctive and essential mode of transportation in the life of the locals. The Sakai tribe will sing a seductive song about boats, rivers, and wind in the hope that this small canoe will transport them safely when fishing, gathering, and hunting. As a result, NRLK as a whole is represented by a canoe boat, such as in the following NRLK quote:

*Lancang ko..cik.. timang batimang lancang ditimang sedang angin koncang*

*Hilir lancang tak mau.... mudik lancang tak mau.*

.....  
*Sungai Patani su lah taganang*

*Small boat.....rocking the boat swinging when the wind is strong*

*The boat doesn't want to go downstream.... it doesn't want to go upstream either.*

.....  
*The Petani*

*River is already flooded*

Based on the song above, the small canoe is hummed with a rhythm of comforting and seducing. Not only that, during the NRLK narrative process, various types of equipment needed for traveling down the river were prepared on the small boat, such as labu jengkuk, manggalo, timbo, tanggouk, lukah, and clothes made of bark.

All of this equipment represents the Sakai tribe's culture, which is strongly tied to nature; not only does their life rely on natural goods, but so does their spiritual life. As a result, the indigenous tribe of Riau Province is attempting to retain peace with nature through NRLK singing.

The researcher was inspired to construct a type of metamorphosis of the NRLK from a work introduction song to a batik design after seeing the NRLK narrative.

This intends to preserve the presence of NRLK so that the larger community can learn more about it through batik designs. Aside from that, this batik design has the potential to be a source of cultural tourism and a sustainable creative economy.

The form of NRLK before transformation is attached to this photo. Fishermen rowing little canoes down the river while humming NRLK with all their hearts.



**Photo 1.** Fishermen and NRLK Speakers on the Batang Pudu River, Bengkalis Documentation: Rangkuti (2022)

NRLK was then transformed into a batik design. Yellow flowers with many tendrils can be seen on the batik shirt pattern. This flower is a replica of the labu jengkuk flower, which is common in the jungle. The labu jengkuk itself serves as a reservoir for river water. After a few days, the stored water will change to the consistency of refrigerator water and be ready.

Next, there is a small brown canoe made of wood. The color brown has a philosophical meaning for the Sakai tribe. Brown is a natural color that is identical to wood in the forest. Then, the clothing design is dominated by black as an earthy color philosophy. This is based on the local wisdom of the local community which is attached to the forest and land. As in Effendy's expression (in Al Azhar, 2018:53), namely:

*Tanda orang memegang amanah Pantang merusak hutan dan tanah Beramu tidak merusak kayu Berotan tidak merusak hutan Bergetah tidak merusak rimba Berumah tidak merusak tanah Berkebun tidak merusak gunung Berladang tidak merusak padang*

Translation:

A sign of someone holding a trust Abstain from destroying forests and land Beramu does not damage wood Berotan does not damage the forest Gummies do not harm the jungle Homesteading does not destroy the land Gardening does not destroy mountains Farming does not destroy the fields

The results of the NRLK transformation in the form of batik are a representation of the local wisdom of the Sakai tribal community who always remember the advice above as a guiding principle in treating land forests. The batik engineering results that have been designed are named "Lancang Kocik " batik by the title of NRLK. The following are the results of the design in question:



**Photo 2.** Batik Lancang Kocik  
Documentation: Listi Mora Rangkuti

Several meanings were discovered based on the NRLK transformation, including (1) representation of land forest; (2) Sakai ethnic identity; (3) fishing tradition; (4) traditional technology in oversized clothing; and (5) cultural tourism potential.

The NRLK narrative and the design of the "Lancang Kocik " batik pattern are both representations of the land forest, which is both a source of life and a spiritual form of expression for the Sakai ethnic community. Furthermore, this NRLK transformation became a vehicle for maintaining the existence of the Sakai ethnic identity. Thus, "Lancang Kocik" can be patented as property of the Sakai tribe community in Petani Village.

The existence of a tradition of fishing using traditional tools that are simple and far from having side effects on the ecology is a culture that must be maintained for sustainable living. This means that using a wooden canoe will not pollute the river like using a motor boat. Apart from that, the use of tanggouk and lukah will protect the habitat of the fish in the river so that only large fish are caught. Meanwhile, small fish will return to the river and become the embryo of breeding to avoid the threat of species extinction.

This is also true of the traditional technologies used in the production of regalia for the people who control the NRLK. This enormous clothing is made of tree bark and is used to shield the head and body from various animal hazards while in the jungle. Aside from that, the big hat serves as a head shield from falling tree branches. However, using today's thread-making techniques, NRLK has been turned into batik patterns on clothes manufactured with current technology.

Aside from that, the transformation of the NRLK symbol may have cultural tourist potential. This means that the existence of "Lancang Kocik" batik has become popular and well-known in various circles, inviting tourists to watch NRLK narratives, enjoy culinary delights, and purchase "Lancang Kocik " batik, which

has a distinct pattern and a distinct philosophy and is related to the historical aspects of the Sakai tribe. This initiative to popularize oral literature is consistent with Busby and Klug's (2001 in Putra, 2019) explanation: *Literary tourism occurs when authors or their literature become so popular that people are drawn to either those locations associated with the author (e.g. birthplace, home, graveside) or those featured within their writings.*

#### 4.2. *Lancang Kocik for the Creative Industry*

During the NRLK narrative, the setting used was the Batang Pudu River. The atmosphere of the narrative takes place after the sun is no longer above the crown of the head. The time of this narrative was chosen and adapted to the hot conditions. Even though the river that is used as a place for the narrative is a river that produces a lot of fish, the river is no longer surrounded by trees like a river in the middle of a forest. The river is surrounded by palm trees so the atmosphere around the river is very hot. Therefore, the time for the narrative was chosen when the atmosphere was no longer hot, namely around 15.00 Western Indonesian Time.

NRLK is expressed with tremendous wisdom throughout the narrative, full of aesthetic messages conditioned by local wisdom and cultural depth. However, with natural conditions progressively being graded as a result of corporate control of land forests, the potential of NRLK, which comprises cultural aesthetics, could also be graded because the narrative is set in land forests and rivers. As a result, it is critical to convey the form of change of the NRLK symbol to preserve the existence of Riau Province's indigenous tribes' songs. Batik patterns depict the process of symbol transformation. Aside from that, the NR symbol has been engineered.

By opening up the insight of the Sakai ethnic community through culturally based creative economic opportunities, several actions will be formed in the form of products that can become a source of income for the local community as well as increase regional income. Apart from that, the existence of these cultural products will automatically preserve the cultural wealth and traditional community of the Sakai Tribe. As stated by Ayu (2021) in the Promotion and Dissemination of Communal Intellectual Property Activities in Balikpapan, the Government together with Indigenous communities must play an active role in protecting Communal Intellectual Property related to the Human Rights of Indigenous Communities by upholding morals, social values, and culture values so that we and our children and grandchildren can learn and develop the culture that exists in Indonesia.

If NRLK narratives are carried out regularly, it will provide opportunities for cultural tourism. The existence of cultural tourism does not only function as a recreation area for tourists. However, local people and tourists will get to know local wisdom such as (1) technology for fishing in rivers; (2) typical Sakai tribe clothing made from tree bark as a traditional

technological product; (3) typical *Mangalo* food made from poison sweet potatoes and prepared simply; (4) patin spicy sour curry, a typical culinary dish of the Sakai tribe using Dayak onions; and (5) NRLK as a work introduction song so that all products maintain their existence.

Various parties, including *content creators*, researchers, and perhaps the government, will have a fantastic opportunity to document NRLK's narrative. NRLK's distinctiveness can draw people's attention, allowing it to be used as a digital item that can be circulated through various social media platforms. Of course, the entire wording and context of the NRLK narrative must be polished to the greatest extent possible. Appearance, narrative place, approval for the activity, implementers, and performers of the activity must all be carefully mobilized and begun. Of course, the 2011 *Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival* and the 2016 *Banyuwangi Ethno Carnival* with the theme "*The Legend of Sritanjung Sidopekso*" have successfully transformed Banyuwangi's oral traditions into a type of cultural activity that can be enjoyed by people of all ages. This practice was effectively documented and has since become a routine and continuous exercise.

Furthermore, transforming the NRLK emblem into "*Lancang Kocik*" batik can aid in the growth of cultural tourism. This batik design is a common memento from the Sakai tribe's native land in Petani Village, Bathin Solapan Sub-District, Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province. The beauty of batik is not just in its pattern, but also in its cultural identity, which is inextricably linked to the Sakai tribe.

To actualize all actions emerging from the alteration of the NRLK emblem, efforts must be made to develop partnerships with the government. For example, to manufacture "*Lancang Kocik*" batik products would undoubtedly require a batik designer as well as production expenditures. Thus, local communities can work with Indigenous groups and the government to support this activity with government help in the form of cultural facilitation. The batik manufacturer will then be offered so that tourists can make "*Lancang Kocik*" batik as a typical Petani Village gift.

#### 4.3. *Lancang Kocik Sustainable Cultural Efforts*

Because maintaining NRLK is the same as conserving the ecosystem, its presence represents the climax of the Sakai ethnic community's cultural understanding. As a result, the NRLK symbol's evolution is a type of sustainable culture. According to Adnan (2023), the characteristics of a sustainable culture are (1) Increased environmental awareness; (2) social sustainability; (3) preservation of cultural heritage; (4) artistic and cultural creativity; and (5) local independence.

According to Adnan, the existence of "*Lancang Kocik*" batik engineering is a sort of sustainable culture at NRLK, as mentioned below: (1) an effort to maintain the existence of NRLK while maintaining the ecology

of land forests, as well as the identity of the Sakai tribe as an indigenous tribe that has communal intellectuals. ; (2) maintaining social interaction and the existence of the Sakai tribal community in the Petani Village so that there are efforts to revitalize the Sakai language; (3) the existence of this study is a major effort to make the NRLK narrative part of the WBTb recording; (4) involving the Sakai ethnic community, speakers, traditional leaders, traditional administrators, as well as involving the role of the Government in efforts to develop the creative economy, culinary, entertainment and arts. Additionally, attention must be paid to improving artists' qualifications, welfare, and protection; and (5) the existence of "Lancang Kocik" batik is an effort to train people's independence in appreciating their culture as well as an effort to achieve creative and productive economic independence.

## 5. CONCLUSION

NRLK is not only an introductory work song performed without a role in the lives of local people, but it is also for the larger community as local wisdom that serves as an environmental reminder (alarm). Its presence, which is still unregistered as WBTb, is a reason for concern because it is critical for both universal and cultural survival.

NRLK was transformed into a symbol in the form of "Lancang Kocik" batik through a semiotic and creative economic method. This batik pattern includes a deep philosophy about history and environmental morals. As a result, this batik can be utilized as a typical souvenir from the Sakai tribe to open up creative economic opportunities for the local community.

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