

UMA AND JIRAIK AS A SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR CREATING MENTAWAI BATIK MOTIF DESIGNS

Agusti Efi ^{1*}, Yulia Aryati ², Gabila Heira Mutia ³ and Nurul Inayah Hutasuhut ⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia.
*Corresponding Author Email: agustiefie@yahoo.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.12622960](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12622960)

Abstract

This research aims to explain how the process of creating Batik art originates from Mentawai culture, in this case, *Uma* and *Jiraik*. In this research, 3 motifs have become icons of Mentawai, namely *Uma Sabbat Dapdap*, *Uma Sabbat Jiraik Nia Te Parurukat*, and *Jiraik Niate Tai Kerei*. The shift in traditional culture caused by modernization has caused several Mentawai cultures to begin to disappear and become extinct. This happens in line with the development of tourism so many foreign tourists are interested in the Mentawai Islands tourist destination. The impact that occurs is a shift towards traditional culture, some of which are no longer practiced by the community. So, one of the conservation efforts undertaken is to turn traditional cultural arts into Batik art. This article uses *Uma* and *Jiraik* as a source of inspiration in developing Batik art based on Mentawai arts and culture. *Uma* is a traditional house and *Jiraik* is a symbol of the greatness of the Mentawai people which is placed on the front wall of *Uma*. From the *Uma* and *Jiraik* forms, it was developed into a Batik art motif design (painting on cloth) which is called *Komak* in the Mentawai language.

Keywords: Visual Culture, Designs, Mentawai, Batik Motif.

1. INTRODUCTION

Modernization brings many changes to people's lives in various aspects of life (Lawless & Medvedev, 2016; Triyanto, 2020). Modernization can be interpreted as a renewal or overhaul of something old into something new (Abivian et al, 2017; Choi, 2019).

Modernization is believed to be a change in society from a traditional state to a modern society (Aufadina et al, 1987; Hur & Cassidy, 2019; Matondang, 2019). Currently, modernization is a principle for stability in real life (Miftahuddin & Pratama, 2023).

Thus, modernization is also a process of creating various aspects of life, thought patterns, and cultural products (Rahman & Gong, 2016; McQuillan, 2020; ElShishtawy et al, 2022). Modernization changes various aspects of life, including thought patterns, which sometimes change or eliminate traditional culture in life. Even though many traditional cultures have high values.

Currently, there has been a modernization phenomenon in the Mentawai Islands community, there is a shift in social and cultural values (Nur, 2019). The Mentawai Islands are currently one of the favorite tourist destinations for foreign tourists so they have an influence modernization does not only come from national culture but also international culture.

Many customs and cultures passed down from their ancestors are still held by the Mentawai people, although some have become extinct and are threatened with extinction (Bakker, 2007; Florentino, 2022).

The Mentawai people have strong customs and have survived for hundreds of years. One form of culture that is still maintained today is "*Uma*".

Uma is part of the existence of the Mentawai people which means "place" inhabited by several individuals who are related to each other in terms of descent or the traditional house of the Mentawai tribe. *Uma* is considered the center of life for the Mentawai indigenous people (Yudas et al (2023)). *Uma* is a symbol of the togetherness of the Mentawai people led by *Sikerei*.

Sikerei is a term for the head of an *Uma* (traditional house). *Sikerei* can lead ceremonies related to the spirit world, so generally, *Sikerei* will look at *Uma* (Sitanggung, 2022). Another function of *Uma* for the Mentawai people is as a sacred place for offering and storing the skulls of hunted animals, a place for celebrations, parties, and group meetings (Krismanto & Santosa, 2016; Alfin et al., 2020).

The symbol of the greatness of the *Sikerei* house which is located in front of *Uma* is called *Jiraik*. *Jiraik* is a traditional Mentawai element commonly used in *Uma* in the welcoming area or terrace (Rina, 2021).

The shape of *Jiraik* resembles a circulation pattern, shaped like an ax which is generally black. *Jiraik* symbolizes the daily life of the Mentawai people, where this symbol depicts the lives of those who still live a very traditional lifestyle. *Jiraik* is only owned by important people in customs, which is a symbol of greatness and harmony. *Jiraik* is placed on the *Uma* wall at the front of the Mentawai traditional house.

Mentawai traditional culture is one of the oldest cultures, with changes occurring, the symbols in *Uma* and *Jiraik* also change along with cultural shifts. So this research is one of the conservation efforts by using *Uma* and *Jiraik* as sources for creating motifs that are included in Batik art (paintings on cloth). The *Jiraik* and *Uma* forms are distilled into Batik art motif designs or decoration motifs on cloth. The term cloth for the Mentawai people is called "*Komak*", the same as Batik for the Javanese people.

Komak is a typical Mentawai cloth that is wrapped around the waist and still is today used in certain traditional events (Munandar et al., 2022). Initially, *Komak* was just plain cloth, but *Komak* can be used as an effort to preserve Mentawai culture and as a source of inspiration in developing Batik art based on Mentawai culture. Hakim (2018) added decorations with motifs inspired by *Uma* and *Jiraik*, *Uma* and *Jiraik* original Mentawai traditional culture can be one step in preserving Mentawai culture.

2. METHODS

This research describes the process of creating Batik designs and products based on Mentawai culture. The method used in this research is the creation method. The art creation method is a research-based practice.

The creative research process will generally start with an idea or thoughts then be realized with creation, and then exploration will be carried out to perfect the work (Widayanti, 2015; Husen, 2021).

This research describes the creation of Mentawai Batik art using the ideas of *Uma* and *Jiraik*. For the suitability of Mentawai Batik products, which were the source of *Uma* and *Jiraik* ideas, art, and aesthetics, expert tests were carried out. The following are the stages of creating Batik art (Fig 1).

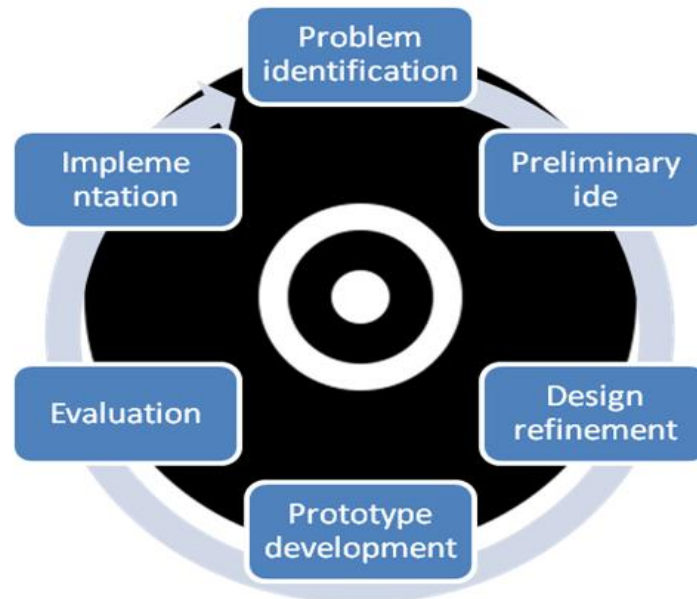


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework the Process of Creating Batik Art based on Mentawai Culture based on FEA (Lamb & Kallal, 1992)

This research includes; problem identification, preliminary ideas, design refinement, prototype development, evaluation, and implementation. At this implementation stage, the Batik-making process will be carried out. Preparation: The first preparatory stage is to prepare all the necessary equipment and materials. Preparing *Mori* is the main factor in producing quality Batik. Therefore, before making Batik, it is done by the Batik preparation steps, namely: Stage first namely measuring and cutting the *Mori*, soaking (*Ngetel*), drying the *Mori*, and hitting the *Mori* with a wooden bat (*Ngemplong*), Stage two namely Batik, Batik using the written Batik technique, is done as follows

- 1) Designing a design on paper;
- 2) The design that has been made on paper is transferred to the *Mori*; and
- 3) Direct Batik is done using painting techniques on cloth on the design that has been transferred to the *Mori* using melted wax (Batik wax).

Stage first this Batik is done quickly and don't let the wax dry out when making Batik (Trixie et al., 2020). Stage second namely coloring, the material that has been finished being canted, is spread over the gate so that it is easy to be canted. After making a procession color solution, the solution can be used immediately by brushing the dye according to the desired color in certain places (Alamsyah, 2018).

If an error occurs when coloring, the cloth or *Mori* must be cleaned quickly so as not to damage the color of the Batik. In this coloring, it is better to paint the *Mori* with a softer color first, because if a color error occurs it can be covered with a lighter or darker color. Apart from dab coloring, a dyeing process is also carried out (Susanti & Azhar, 2020). Before the *Mori* is dipped in the dye liquid, it is first soaked in enough *tepol* liquid for about five minutes, which functions to open the pores of the *Mori* and facilitate color absorption.

The method for dyeing dyes is that the dye solution is put into the respective places before the *Mori* is dipped (Wahyudi et al., 2021). The final stage is Melorod or removing *Malam*. The final process of making Batik is removing the wax on the surface of the

Mori. Eliminating the *Malam* is also called melorod. After the night is separated from the *Mori*, rinse with clean cold water until all the wax is removed from the surface of the *Mori* (Blissick et al, 2017; Bhatt et al., 2019; Wood et al., 2022). When all night has been wasted, the Batik is then aired without sunlight.

3. RESULTS

Uma as a place to live has an important meaning both in daily life and in traditional ceremonies. *Uma* is very important in the existence of the Mentawai people. *Jiraik* is a symbol of the greatness of the owner of *Uma*. *Uma* and *Jiraik* were used as a source of inspiration or ideas in creating decorative Batik art, with the hope that the Batik art that emerged would have Mentawai cultural characteristics. Below is an explanation of the basic creation of Mentawai cultural Batik motifs.

3.1 *Uma Sabbat Dapdap*

This design is inspired by the meaning of community and distance for the Mentawai people. *Uma* is a traditional house for the Mentawai people. Generally, one *Uma* consists of one group of Mentawai people. *Jiraik* is one of the traditional symbols found in the community. "*Jiraik*" is a concept of life balance that is very important in Mentawai culture. This concept includes a balance between human relationships and nature, between individuals and communities, and between the material and spiritual worlds. *Jiraik* became the basis of their life philosophy and worldview. For the Mentawai people, there are several concepts of balance as a principle of their life, namely balance with nature, namely the relationship between the Mentawai people and their natural surroundings, social balance, namely the relationship between fellow Mentawai people and between tribes in Mentawai, spiritual balance includes the balance of the relationship between the Mentawai people and their ancestral spirits and natural spirits as well as the balance between material and spiritual in the form of the importance of maintaining a balance between material and spiritual needs for the Mentawai people. For more details, see Fig 1 and Fig 2 below.

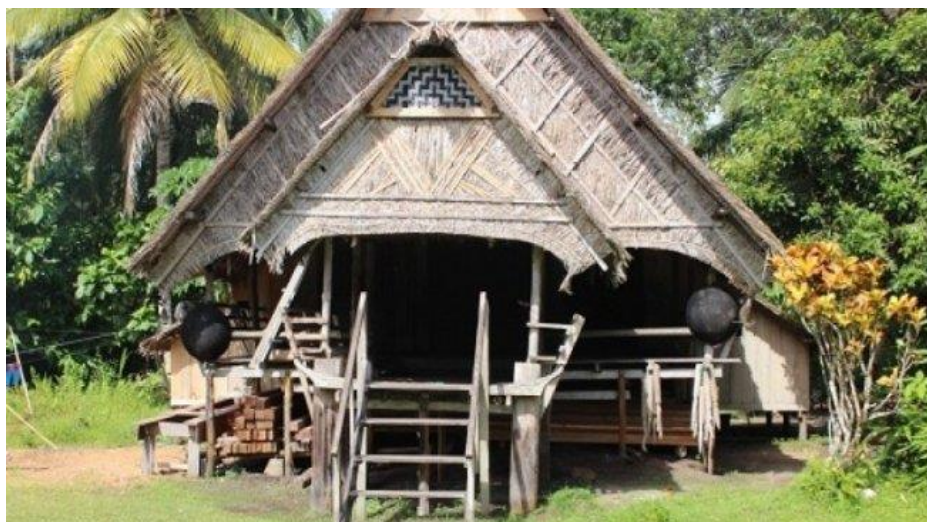


Figure 2: *Uma* of Mentawai People House

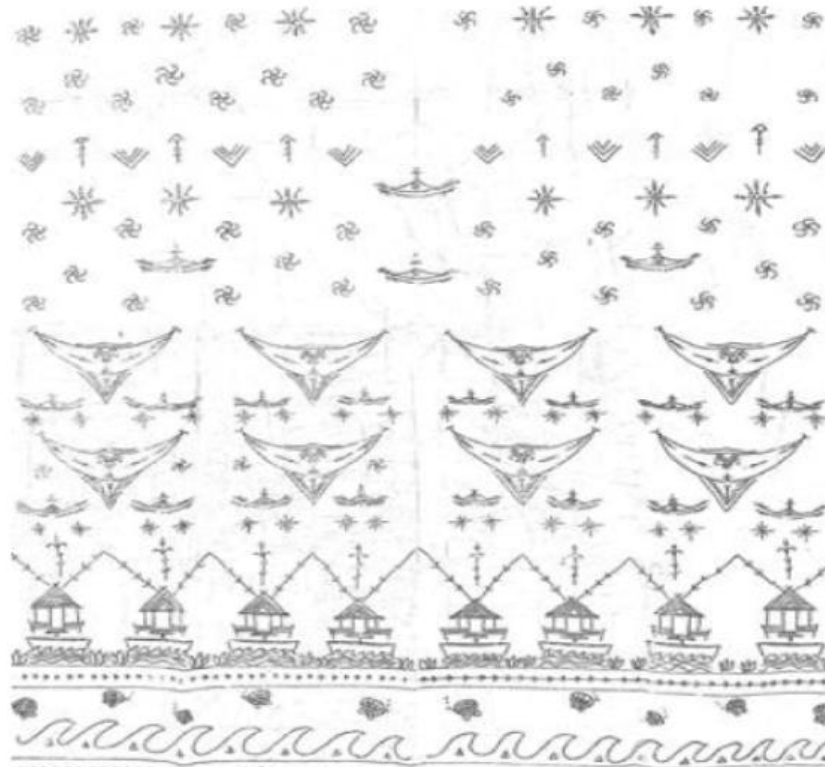


Figure 3: Motif Design Development Source of Ideas from Uma and *Jiraik* Mentawai People

3.2 *Uma Sabbat Jiraik Nia Te Parurukat*

This design is inspired by the meaning of *Jiraik* as a symbol of the greatness of *Sikerei*. In Mentawai culture, "*Jiraik*" is a symbol of greatness and status for "*Sikerei*" (spiritual healers or shamans). *Sikerei* is a respected figure and is considered to have a special relationship with the spirit world and the supernatural. They have an important role in carrying out traditional rituals and ceremonies and are considered to have deep spiritual knowledge.

Jiraik is generally used as a symbol for the Mentawai people which is placed in front of the community. There are several meanings of *Jiraik* as a symbol of the *Sikerei* greatness, namely Spiritual Authority (*Jiraik* is a sign of recognition of the *Sikerei* expertise and spiritual status). When *Sikerei* use *Jiraik*, they demonstrate their authority and authority in carrying out spiritual and medicinal tasks. *Jiraik* also reflects a connection with the spirit world and the supernatural.

Sikerei is thought to have the ability to communicate with ancestral spirits, as well as facilitate interactions between the human world and these spirits. *Jiraik* is also an important attribute in traditional ceremonies and rituals. Traditional ceremonies and rituals have a special role in maintaining balance and harmony in Mentawai society, and *Sikerei* have a key role in their implementation. The use of *Jiraik* by *Sikerei* is also part of the cultural identity of the Mentawai people. This reflects the values, beliefs, and traditions inherent in people's lives. For more details, see Fig 3 and Fig 4 below.



Figure 4: *Jiraik* Symbols on the *Sikerei* House

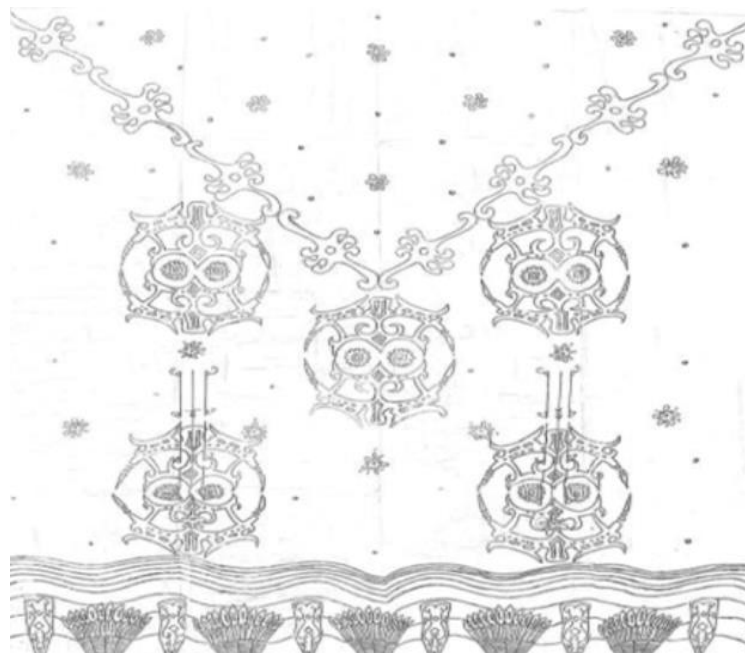


Figure 5: Development of Design Motifs Source of Ideas from Mentawai People Homes

3.3 Design Feasibility Test

The feasibility test was carried out by design experts consisting of 3 Fine Arts lecturers at Universitas Negeri Padang, 3 Fashion Design lecturers at Universitas Negeri Padang, 2 entrepreneurial partners (as product developers and batik business marketing), and 2 batik consumers/curators. The results of the feasibility test can be seen in the following Table 1 below.

Table 1: Results of Feasibility Test for Material Experts in Motif Design Development

Assessment Aspects	%	Category
Source of ideas	87.5	highlyfeasible
Stylization	87.2	highlyfeasible
Design development	89.1	highlyfeasible
Aesthetics	87.3	highlyfeasible
Mentawai artistic character	84.7	highlyfeasible

From the results of the material expert feasibility test in the table above, namely: 1) feasibility of the idea source with a value of 87.14 in the highly feasible category; 2) stylization with a value of 87.2% in the highly feasible category; 3) design development with a value of 89.1%, in the highly feasible category; and 4) Aesthetics with a value of 87.3% and the characteristic content of Mentawai art is 84.7%. From the 5 aspects of the assessment above, an average of 87.1% was obtained in the very appropriate category.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Developing a source of new design ideas into a reality is full of challenges and is often not as easy as generating the idea. The difficulty of realizing an idea is limited by the level of development of science and technology at that time. Creative ideas are just the result of abstract thinking. The idea will remain abstract until the idea is realized or realized. An idea will have an impact and benefits will be felt if the idea is translated into real form. Therefore, several steps need to be carried out. Product innovation is a combination of various processes that influence each other. Innovation is not only limited to product development or new services. Innovation also includes new business thinking and new processes. Innovation is also seen as a mechanism for businesses to adapt to a dynamic environment. Therefore, in creating a product, it is hoped that it will create new thoughts, and new ideas that offer innovative products and provide satisfactory service to customers. Product innovation is a combination of various processes that influence each other. This results in motifs with a strong Mentawai cultural philosophy, namely *Uma Sabbath Dapdap*, *Uma Sabbath Jaraik Nia Te Parurukat*, and *Jaraik Niate Tai Kerei*.

Acknowledgments

This research is an annual study for the acceleration of professors by the Universitas Negeri Padang. The author would like to thank the Rector for his ideas of course, the ease of administration in conducting this research, and the Mentawai Island Regency art studio in particular.

References

- 1) Abivian, M., Budiamin, A., & Agustin, M. (2017). Program bimbingan karir untuk mengembangkan kemampuan membuat pilihan karir peserta didik. *utile: Jurnal Kependidikan*, 3(1), 9-17
- 2) Alfin, E., Widihardjo, W., & Maharani, Y. (2020). Architecture and Interior Elements Transformation of Uma Mentawai (Communal Houses of Mentawai Tribe) (Case Study: Matotonan Village, District of South Siberut). *1st International Conference on Art, Craft, Culture and Design 2017*. Bandung Institute of Technology.
- 3) Alamsyah, A. (2018). Kerajinan batik dan pewarnaan alami. *Endogami: Jurnal ilmiah kajian antropologi*, 1(2), 136-148. doi: 10.14710/endogamy.1.2.136-148.
- 4) Aufadina, K., & Irfansyah, M. (2021). Modernization, Monitor Screen And Cultural Change. *Jurnal Ilmu Budaya*, 9(2), 37-42. doi: 10.34050/jib.v9i2.13670.

- 5) Bakker, L. (2008). Foreign images in Mentawai: Authenticity and the exotic. *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land-en volkenkunde/Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, 163(2-3), 263-288. doi: 10.1163/22134379-90003686.
- 6) Bhatt, D., Silverman, J., & Dickson, M. A. (2019). Consumer interest in upcycling techniques and purchasing upcycled clothing as an approach to reducing textile waste. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 12(1), 118-128. doi: 10.1080/17543266.2018.1534001.
- 7) Blissick, M., Dickson, M. A., Silverman, J., & Cao, H. (2017). Retailers' extent of involvement in sustainability and role in creating sustainable apparel and textiles from South Africa. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 10(3), 265-275. doi: 10.1080/17543266.2017.1298160.
- 8) Choi, K. H. (2019). Eco-tech fashion project: collaborative design process using problem-based learning. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 12(1), 105-117. doi: 10.1080/17543266.2018.1516808.
- 9) ElShishtawy, N., Sinha, P., & Bennell, J. A. (2022). A comparative review of zero-waste fashion design thinking and operational research on cutting and packing optimisation. *International Journal of Fashion design, technology and education*, 15(2), 187-199. doi: 10.1080/17543266.2021.1990416.
- 10) Florentino, M. (2022). The Influence of Customs on the Development of Elementary School Age Children in Maumere City. *BADA'A: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 4(2), 246-256. doi: 10.37216/badaa.v4i2.670.
- 11) Hakim, L. M. (2018). atik as a National and Cultural Heritage. *Nation State: Journal of International Studies (NSJIS)*, 1(1), 60-89.
- 12) Hur, E., & Cassidy, T. (2019). Perceptions and attitudes towards sustainable fashion design: challenges and opportunities for implementing sustainability in fashion. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*. 12(2), 208–217, 2019, doi: 10.1080/17543266.2019.1572789.
- 13) Husen, H. (2021). *Work Creation Research Methodology*. Yogyakarta: Andi.
- 14) Krismanto K.R.A., & Santosa, I. (2016). Modernisasi dan komersialisasi Uma masyarakat Mentawai sebuah deskripsi fenomenologis. *Jurnal Sositologi*, 15(2). 187–199. doi: 10.5614/sostek.itbj.2016.15.02.2.
- 15) Lamb, J. M., & Kallal, M. J. (1992). A conceptual framework for apparel design. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 10(2), 42-47.
- 16) Lawless, E., & Medvedev, K. (2016). Assessment of sustainable design practices in the fashion industry: Experiences of eight small sustainable design companies in the Northeastern and Southeastern United States. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 9(1), 41-50. doi: 10.1080/17543266.2015.1116616.
- 17) Matondang, A. (2019). Dampak Modernisasi Terhadap Kehidupan Sosial Masyarakat. *Wahana Inovasi: Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian Masyarakat UISU*, 8(2), 188-194.
- 18) McQuillan, H. (2020). Digital 3D design as a tool for augmenting zero-waste fashion design practice. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 13(1), 89-100. doi: 10.1080/17543266.2020.1737248.
- 19) Munandar, A., Noer, M., Erwin, E., & Syahni, R. (2022). Diversity of Forms of Local Wisdom of the Mentawai Tribe Community in the Marine Tourism Area of Siberut Island. *Menara Ilmu: Jurnal Penelitian dan Kajian Ilmiah*, 16(1). 1–10. doi: 10.31869/mi.v16i1.3243.
- 20) Nur, M. (2019). Sikerei Dalam Cerita: Penelusuran Identitas Budaya Mentawai Sikerei In The Story: Tracing Mentawai Cultural Identity. *Jurnal Masyarakat Dan Budaya*, 89-102. doi: 10.14203/jmb.v21i1.535.

- 21) Pratama, D. F., & Miftahuddin, M. (2023). The role of new priyayi in the modernization of javanese culture through indian culture at the end of the 19th - early 20th century introduction modernism or modern as a key term in this study can literally be interpreted as 'new' or 'now'. *Modernism. Historia Vitae*, 3(1), 13-24. doi: 10.24071/hv.v3i1.5652.
- 22) Rahman, O., & Gong, M. (2016). Sustainable practices and transformable fashion design—Chinese professional and consumer perspectives. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 9(3), 233-247.
- 23) Rina, N. (2021). Tradition, cultural contact and English for tourism: the case of Mentawai, Indonesia. *Heliyon*, 7(6). doi: 10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07322.
- 24) Sitanggang, A. R. (2022). Siagai Laggek: Knowledge of Medicinal Plants by Healers as Traditional Medicine in the Mentawai Islands. *Balale': Jurnal Antropologi*, 3(2), 91-114.
- 25) Susanti, K., & Azhar, F. (2020). Pengenalan Proses Mambatik sebagai Upaya Pelestarian Batik Tulis. *SENADA: Semangat Nasional Dalam Mengabdikan*, 1(1), 97-106. doi: 10.56881/senada.v1i1.15.
- 26) Triyanto, T. (2020). Peluang dan tantangan pendidikan karakter di era digital. *Jurnal Civics: Media Kajian Kewarganegaraan*, 17(2), 175-184. doi: 10.21831/jc.v17i2.35476.
- 27) Trixie, A. A. (2020). The Philosophy of Batik Motifs as the Identity of the Indonesian Nation. *Folio*, 1(1), 1-9.
- 28) Wahyudi, H., Widodo, S. A., Setiana, D. S., & Irfan, M. (2021). Ethnomathematics: Batik activities in tancep batik. *Journal of Medives: Journal of Mathematics Education IKIP Veteran Semarang*, 5(2), 305-315. doi: 10.31331/medicivesveteran.v5i2.1699.
- 29) Widayanti, M. M. N. (2015). Methods Of Creation in the Field of Fine Arts: Practice based Research, Works of Art as Production of Knowledge and Discourse. *CORAK Jurnal Seni Kriya*, 4(1), 23-37.
- 30) Wood, J., Redfern, J., & Verran, J. (2023). Developing textile sustainability education in the curriculum: pedagogical approaches to material innovation in fashion. *International Journal of Fashion Design, Technology and Education*, 16(2), 141-151. doi: 10.1080/17543266.2022.2131913.
- 31) Yudas, Y., Helmi, H., Elfindri, E., & Asrinaldi, A. (2023). The Influence of Foreign Cultural Discourse on the Uma Settlement in Mentawai, Indonesia. *Journal of Pragmatics and Discourse Research*, 3(1), 70-80. doi: 10.51817/jpdr.v3i1.357.