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**THE ROLE OF JAVANESE CULTURE IN THE FORMATION OF GENDER  
LABELS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Javanese culture is one of the cultures that forms the identity of the Indonesian nation. The Javanese tribe is the largest tribe adopted by Indonesian people, not only that, the Javanese tribe also inherited many heritages in the form of temples, weapons and beliefs that are still believed in today. This article aims to provide learning and examine the role of Javanese culture in the formation of gender labels. This starts with knowing the role of culture, knowing Javanese culture, gender roles, multicultural counseling views on labeling, and knowing the relationship between Javanese culture and gender labels. Then from these several things the author can find a new perspective on the formation of labels on gender through the role of Javanese culture. This article aims to obtain a complete picture of the role of Javanese culture in the formation of labels on gender by digging up information from books and research journals that have been carried out previously to carry out a more in-depth review in order to obtain satisfactory results, as well as providing knowledge, especially to readers, especially the younger generation, to understand the important role of Javanese culture. Researchers try to study this phenomenon using qualitative descriptive research methods with a literature study approach. We found that in the era of globalization, people are increasingly aware of not discriminating against women. This is reflected in the increasing support for gender equality in Javanese society.*

**Keywords:** Roles, Javanese Culture, Gender, Labels

# The Role of Javanese Culture in The Formation of Gender Labels

## INTRODUCTION

No	Text Data	Description
1	The Role of Culture	Text data Budaya Dan Kebudayaan: Tinjauan Dari Berbagai Pakar, Wujud-Wujud Kebudayaan, 7 Unsur Kebudayaan Yang Bersifat Universal by Syakhrani, A. W., & Kamil, M. L. year 2022
2	Javanese Culture	Text data Islam Dan Budaya Jawa by Subqi, I., Sutrisno, Ahmadiansyah, R. year 2018  Text data Peranan pembelajaran bahasa jawa dalam melestarikan budaya jawa by Rahmawati, Afitiati. year 2021
3	Gender roles	Text data Bimbingan dan Konseling Multibudaya by Viktor E. Frankl year 2017
4	Multicultural Counseling's View on Labeling	Text data 'Peran Konselor Dalam Konseling Multibudaya Untuk Mewujudkan Kesenjangan Gender' by Khowatim, K. year 2020
5	Javanese Culture and Gender Labels	Text data Budaya patriarki dalam cerita rakyat Jawa Timur by Sugiarti, S. year 2021

Javanese culture, with its richness and traditions, has a great influence in shaping people's norms and behaviors. One of the most deeply embedded aspects is rigid gender stereotypes, where men are expected to be leaders and breadwinners, while women are bound to domestic roles as caretakers of the household and children. These stereotypes, although traditional, can limit life choices and opportunities for individuals, both men and women.

The object of this research is that the phenomenon of discrimination against women is still a harsh reality in various areas of life, such as education, employment and politics. Javanese culture, with its gender stereotypes, can reinforce this discrimination by legitimizing unequal gender roles. This creates barriers for women to reach their full potential and contribute maximally to society.

The research on "The Role of Javanese Culture in the Formation of Gender Labels" is here to understand the root of this problem. By analyzing how Javanese culture shapes gender labels and how this contributes to stereotypes, discrimination and even gender violence, this research is expected to pave the way for appropriate solutions.

The results of this study can serve as a basis for developing effective educational programs and social interventions to address gender issues in Java. A deeper understanding of the influence of Javanese culture on gender labeling is needed.

Ultimately, this research is expected to contribute to efforts to achieve gender equality in Indonesia, which is one of the sustainable development goals. By understanding and addressing gender stereotypes embedded in Javanese culture, we can move forward towards a more just and inclusive society for everyone.

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### **METHOD**

This research is a type of qualitative research with a literature study that requires written descriptive data. Qualitative method research uses humans or human instruments, or the researchers themselves. Asking, analyzing, photographing, and constructing the social situation under study must become a clearer and more meaningful ability for researchers. Definitive data is the value behind the visible data and can be drawn from previous studies.

Literature study, according to Danial and Warsiah in Nadhiroh & Setyawan (2021), is a series of actions that include research material management, reading and recording library data collection techniques, and so on. Library research is a type of research conducted by people conducting research using data sources such as books and journals related to the research subject. The purpose of this method is to find various theories related to the problem under study and to be used as a reference when discussing the results of the research. The object of this research is the phenomenon of the gender label caused by gender roles in Javanese culture so that the scope of the study revolves around the issue of the role of Javanese culture towards the gender label. The data collection technique of this research is a literature study that collects and reviews published research, both from journals, articles, and studies that are still in accordance with the topics discussed. Therefore, the instrument used is the researcher.

According to Nazir in Nadhiroh & Setyawan (2021), the first step is to conduct library research. After determining the research subject, the next step is to conduct theoretical research on the subject. Researchers will gather as much information as possible from relevant literature during the theory search process. Library resources include books, journals, magazines, research results, such as papers and dissertations, and other relevant sources, such as the internet and newspapers.

By books and journals, this research aims to get a complete picture of the role of Javanese culture on the formation of gender labels. To get the results needed by previous researchers, this research will conduct a review through journals or books as a source of information.

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **The Role of Culture**

The origin of the word "Budaya" comes from the Sanskrit word "Buddahyah", which refers to all things related to the human mind and intellect. In Dutch, the term used is "cultuur". In Latin, the word is known as "colore", which denotes the process of cultivating, working, fertilizing and developing, especially in the context of land management and agriculture. According to the definition in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), "culture" includes the mind, intellect, and customs.

Culture is considered a collection of behaviors learned by a community group which is generally considered a tradition or habit of the group and continues to be carried out or passed down from generation to generation (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Jerald G. and Rober in (Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022) state that culture consists of a system of thought that requires individual responses to the environment. Indonesia is a large nation with cultural diversity. This cultural diversity is a natural event that is born from a relationship or interaction, a different perspective, so that cultural behavior emerges which then becomes the tradition of the local community (Umami, 2022).

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Culture has a very important role in shaping and influencing the lives of people as a whole. Culture is a mirror of a society's collective identity. Through language, traditions and values transmitted from one generation to the next, individuals feel connected to their roots and feel part of something bigger than themselves. Cultural values shape social and ethical norms in society. Norms help regulate individual behavior and shape social interactions. In many cases, culture can also play a role in resolving conflicts and creating consensus among community members. In addition, culture plays an important role in strengthening the sense of solidarity and social integration in society. Through celebrations, rituals and ceremonies, individuals feel connected to each other and build strong relationships. This helps create a sense of unity and interdependence among members of society.

### **Javanese Culture**

Indonesia is a country that consists of many ethnic groups. In fact, the national culture emerges as a result of the fusion and combination of all levels of culture that exist in Indonesia, reflecting all aspects of the nation's life, such as language, art, customs, traditions, and beliefs of the adherents. Javanese culture is one of them (Nadhiroh & Setyawan, 2021).

According to Ciputra in Riska et. al. (2023), many tribes live in Indonesia. The two largest tribes are Javanese and Batak. Two tribes whose differences are very clear. Speaking and behaving can show these differences. According to Suseno in Riska et. al. (2023), two beliefs that shape Javanese social patterns affect their life patterns. The first says that people should live in harmony by trying to avoid conflict, and the second says that people should learn to respect others according to their degree and position. The Javanese self-image is one of being polite, calm, gentle, and speaking with subtle language and manners.

Javanese culture and Islamic acculturation are ancestral heritage passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, this custom can be included in the category of folklore. Folklor, according to Danandjaja in Subqi, I. et al. (2018), is part of a collective culture that is widespread and passed down from generation to generation, traditionally in various versions, both oral and exemplary, and equipped with gestures or reminder aids. John Harold Bruvant (in Subqi, I et. al., 2018) said that folklore can be divided into three groups based on its type. The first is oral folklor; this consists of traditional expressions, traditional questions, folk prose stories, and folk songs. The second is partially oral folklor; this consists of a combination of oral and non-oral elements, such as folk beliefs, games, customs, ceremonies, and folk feasts. This folklore is sometimes derived from other materials. Folk architecture, handicrafts, traditional clothing and jewelry, food, musical instruments, and weapons are some material examples.

### **Gender roles**

According to the Encyclopedia of Women's Studies in Rahmawati et. al (2021), gender is "a cultural concept that seeks to make distinctions in terms of roles, behavior, mentality, and emotional characteristics between men and women that develop in society", and "gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women created in the family, society, and culture" (UNESCO in Rahmawati et. al., 2021). HT. Wilson in Rahmawati et. al (2021) considers gender as "the basis for determining the different contributions of men and women to culture and collective life that cause them to be male and female."

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Gender practices can differ across cultures, regions and social groups, according to Eckert in Ramli & Basri (2021). However, according to people's understanding, especially in Indonesia, gender roles are assigned to individuals that are culturally determined, reflecting people's common behaviors and attitudes as masculine and feminine in a culture.

According to Ramli & Basri (2021) A person's gender identity is part of their whole identity that has a relationship between their thoughts about the past and their expectations about their gender. Gender is a cultural issue that categorizes men and women to be masculine and feminism. Each culture has different ways of assigning roles, attributes and traits to men and women.

In general, gender roles consist of a collection of behavior patterns that men and women are expected to display differently based on their gender. According to Weinreich in Ramli & Basri (2021) explains that a person's gender identity is shaped by past experiences and expectations in accordance with their gender identity. If we look back at Indonesian society as a whole, we see that gender roles in individuals, namely masculine men and feminine women, become the basis of judgments that things outside of it are considered not ideal with society's expectations.

A person's gender identity shapes their gender roles. Individual self-identity is the essence of giving one's self-meaning to their gender identity, which is closely related to social roles and functions formed in various social contexts (Kaplan & Meissner in Ramli & Basri 2021).

### **Multicultural Counseling's View on Labeling**

The multicultural counseling view of gender labeling emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting different gender identities in various cultures and contexts. Gender labeling that affects cultural identity can be linked to the role and function of culture in the cross-cultural communication process. In multicultural counseling, counselors must have the ability to conduct multicultural counseling to realize gender equality. Gender equality is needed so that there is no inequality between men and women. In the context of cultural identity, labeling that affects cultural identity can be related to the importance of cultural identity for us and others, context, conversation topics and our interpretations and attributions (Khowatim, 2020).

The multicultural counseling view of gender labeling emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting different gender identities in various cultures and contexts. Gender labeling that affects cultural identity can be linked to the role and function of culture in the cross-cultural communication process. Gender equality is needed so that there is no inequality between men and women. In the context of cultural identity, labeling that affects cultural identity can be related to the importance of cultural identity for us and others, context, conversation topics and our interpretations and attributions (Umam, 2021).

Labeling is one of the mechanisms used by the social environment to declare someone normal or abnormal, deviant or not deviant. However, the labeling can change from time to time. Labeling theory is not used on those who are proven to violate social rules, this theory is more focused on those who are considered to have made mistakes and are considered deviant based on the legal system. Labeling has a big impact on those who get labeled by society. This is because the self-image they have is replaced by the self-image given by the environment. Therefore, labeling will have a greater impact on those who are weak or in a minority status (Lebong, 2021).

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### Javanese Culture and Gender Labels

Javanese culture, rich in traditions and values, has unique views regarding gender and social roles. The concepts of masculinity and femininity in Javanese society are influenced by cultural values, religion and traditional heritage that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Gender inequality in Java has been a fundamental issue since before Indonesia's independence. The legend of Srikandi is a reflection of this disparity felt by Javanese society at that time. This confirms that the gap is not something new, but has been embedded in the culture for a long time. Although difficult, it is not impossible to erase it. Javanese women are often associated with meek images, such as "ayu" and "gelis". It is as if they have to live up to these standards and are not allowed to fight or do things that are deemed incompatible with this image.

One important aspect of Javanese culture is the concept of "fine" and "rough", which is often associated with femininity and masculinity. Women are considered more "refined" in behavior, language, and thinking, while men are considered more "rough". However, it is important to note that in this context, "smooth" and "rough" are not necessarily negative; both refer more to differences in gender expression. Patriarchal culture often causes inequality in the relationships between men and women. The gender position of men and women is influenced by patriarchal norms which tend to place men above women, both in the public and domestic spheres (Sugiarti, 2021).

Javanese culture also carries the concept of "ronggowarsito", which emphasizes the importance of balance and harmony in all aspects of life, including relations between genders. This concept emphasizes that men and women have complementary roles, not competing or dominating each other.

In the family sphere, there are concepts of "father" and "mother" that go beyond just their role as parents. "Father" is often considered a symbol of strength, protection, and leadership, while "mother" is considered a symbol of gentleness, compassion, and wisdom. Both of these roles are valued and considered important for maintaining balance and harmony in the family.

Handayani & Novianto (Putri, Rahardjo, Lukmantoro, 2024) describe the character of Javanese women as close to culture, with smooth, calm and non-confrontational speech, and prioritizing peace, continuity of family values, empathy, politeness, control, and fortitude. In facing suffering, contributing economically, and being loyal. Javanese women are depicted in Javanese culture as gentle and obedient figures. Javanese women's power is often realized through a long decision-making process, through adaptation, reinterpretation, and diplomatic strategies.

Hereditary roles in Javanese culture place women at the center of the family and household, depicting this role as a destiny that women must live out. Although this destiny initially involved a woman's ability to provide life through pregnancy and breastfeeding, this concept evolved into a woman's obligation to serve her family, in accordance with tradition. Views regarding women's destiny are often reinforced by the belief that biologically and psychologically, women are better suited to managing a household and caring (Connell, 2019).

Traditional Javanese masculinity is often associated with domination and control over women. According to Mashudi and Thoyib in Sugiarti (2021), in Javanese culture as reflected in folklore,

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masculinity has five types, namely chivalry, adventurous spirit, temperamental and arrogance, stubborn and aggressive, and wisdom.

Nowadays, it seems that women play a significant role in various aspects of life. If you pay attention, the reality of life related to the increasing role of women in society is very diverse. There are women who work in factories, in offices, in shops, and even become laborers in other countries. The field of science is also not out of reach of women, it is proven that many scientists, researchers, doctors and professions that are usually synonymous with men's work have been pursued by women.

This is supported by the results of survey data from the East Java Central Bureau of Statistics, the gender inequality index (GII) in East Java in 2022 was 0.440, showing a significant decrease from the previous year of 0.460. This indicates an increase in equality between men and women in East Java, with gender inequality getting smaller.

However, with the development of modern society, views on gender and its social roles continue to change. The impact of globalization, education and the media has changed the way Javanese people understand gender. Although traditional values remain respected, views on gender have become more flexible, allowing individuals to express themselves without being limited by gender stereotypes. It is important to note that this view developed alongside awareness of gender equality. Many modern Javanese individuals are starting to understand the importance of respecting women as equal partners in all aspects of life. This is reflected in increasing support for gender equality in Javanese society. Thus, it is hoped that the concept of masculinity in Java will continue to develop in a more inclusive direction, uniting both genders in harmony and equality.

### **CONCLUSION**

The era of globalization has impacted several aspects of life, education and media have changed the way Javanese society understands gender. While traditional values remain respected, views on gender have become more flexible, allowing individuals to express themselves without being constrained by gender stereotypes. It is important to note that these views are evolving along with the awareness of gender equality. Many Javanese, who are more open-minded and less conservative, are beginning to understand the importance of valuing women as equal partners in all aspects of life.

In the era of globalization, many people are more aware of not discriminating against women. This is reflected in the increasing support for gender equality in Javanese society. Thus, it is expected that the concept of gender in Java will continue to develop in a direction that is more respectful of fellow human beings, and unites the two sexes in harmony and equality.

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