Exploring the Role of Tattoo Discourse in Matotonan Village: Mentawai Tattoo Batik as an Effort to Preserve Tradition in Mentawai

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ABSTRACT

In the remote islands of North Pagai, South Pagai, Sipora, and Siberut, the ancient art of tattooing is on the verge of extinction. However, amidst this cultural decline, a unique endeavor emerges in the heart of Mentawai: the preservation of tattoos through the intricate art of Mentawai tattoo batik. This qualitative ethnographic study delves into the depths of discourse of Mentawai tattoo batik, illuminating its significance in the preservation of Mentawai's rich tattoo heritage. Through meticulous observations across the four islands of Mentawai and in-depth interviews with tattoo owners, particularly the revered Sikerei who lead the sacred Lia rituals, this research uncovers the profound narrative woven within each tattoo motif. In Matotonan Village, once vibrant with tattoo culture, youth no longer hold tattoos in high regard, risking the loss of this ancient tradition. Yet, amidst this cultural shift, Mentawai elders embark on a noble mission: to immortalize the sacred symbols of their ancestors by transferring Mentawai tattoo motifs onto clothing. This symbolic gesture not only safeguards the legacy of Mentawai tattoos but also ensures their transmission to future generations. For the Mentawai people, tattoos transcend mere body art; they embody the sacred connection between humanity and the natural world of Mentawai. As efforts to preserve these timeless symbols gain momentum, batik adorned with Mentawai tattoo motifs emerges as a beacon of hope, igniting a revival of cultural pride and heritage in the heart of Mentawai. Through the production of tattoo motif batik as a burgeoning home industry, the legacy of Mentawai tattoos finds new life, promising to endure for generations to come.

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1. Introduction

In West Sumatra province there are the Minangkabau and Mentawai tribes. These two ethnicities have extraordinary uniqueness. In Minangkabau women have equal rights from an economic and socio-cultural perspective (Zulfa, 2023). Likewise, Mentawai women have the same rights and this causes a transfer of knowledge and a transfer of values within the umma as a place where extended families live in Siberut. Why Siberut? because only the island of Siberut has a rich tradition and culture that still exists. Apart from the rich traditions and culture in Mentawai, there is something even more interesting here, namely Mentawai’s extraordinary tourism.

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Indonesia was discovered as a world-class surfing spot in the early 1990s. This has given rise to the rapid development of the tourism industry. So far, world surfing has been controlled by foreign countries. But now Indonesia has a surfing spot, namely the Mentawai Islands. For 50 years, surfing exploration, and ideal media representation, this quiet surfing wave and high level of adventure was the only place in Mentawai (Ponting: 2005). Tourism areas such as Mentawai require language and culture courses to be designed based on the needs of tourists and travelers which are adapted to the situation and conditions related to experiences and memories (Rahmat, 2023). Developing cultural tourism in Mentawai requires a study of the relationship between traditions, and tourism English, Mentawai traditions and tourism English positively encourage tourists to revisit Mentawai. This is a tourism destination (Rina, 2021). Cultural traditions and the use of English are important elements that must be developed for Mentawai cultural tourism, especially the tattoo tradition of the Mentawai people.

Mentawai, located in the fore arc area east of the Mentawai Islands, minimum length of 600 km (Diamen: 1992). The Mentawai Islands, a pocket of cultural richness located in the middle of the Indonesian archipelago, consists of four main islands: North Pagai, South Pagai, Sipora and Siberut. This pristine area is not only famous for its stunning natural scenery but also for its deep cultural heritage, which is deeply rooted in the indigenous traditions of its people. Among the various cultural practices that constitute Mentawai identity, the art of tattooing has a highly respected status, because it functions as a real expression of ancestral wisdom and a sense of shared belonging (Media Indonesia, 2021). For centuries, tattoos have been an integral aspect of Mentawai life, symbolizing rites of passage, social status, and spiritual connection. At the heart of preserving and preserving this ancient tradition are Sikerei and Lia. One of the traditional rituals in the Mentawai Islands is the lia Pullaggajat which is endangered. This lia is in the Mentawai region, South Siberut. Lia Pullaggajat To prevent disaster, the residents of Matotonan village carry out an annual cleaning ritual in this village (Zulfa, 2023). This ritual honors elders who are respected as guardians of Mentawai customs and rituals, namely Sikerei (Yulia, 2018). As carriers of sacred knowledge and guardians of cultural heritage, Sikerei plays an important role in passing on the cultural meaning of tattoos to the younger generation.

In ethnographic theory, it is relevant to the development of ritual behavior in society, providing insight into often implicit ideas and thoughts that can only be understood through a symbolic examination of the data. Regarding the importance of these rituals, Shefold states that: 'our starting point is the assumption that rituals do not merely enact and give shape to everyday ideas and institutions. For those who participate in it, everyday life and ritual life stand in a dialectical relationship: traditional responses to existing circumstances periodically give rise to forms of expression of critical reflection. This symbolically replaces everyday existence with alternative possibilities and ultimately the two modes of existence complement each other, representing an all-encompassing order' (p. 665). A complete summary of this work in English can be found in category index 105, p. 665-672 text (Reimer, 1988).

However, amidst the winds of modernization and globalization, contemporary Mentawai society grapples with the erosion of traditional values and practices. Observations reveal a concerning trend among the younger Mentawai generation, characterized by a diminishing interest in assuming the revered mantle of the Sikerei (Zulfa et al., 2023). This generational shift underscores the precarious state of traditional tattooing practices in Mentawai, as the dwindling number of Sikerei threatens the continuity of this ancient art form. The decline in traditional tattooing among the Mentawai people raises poignant questions about cultural preservation and identity. In the face of rapid societal changes and external influences, there is an urgent need to safeguard and revitalize Mentawai cultural heritage, including the art of tattooing. Understanding the socio-cultural dynamics underlying this phenomenon is essential for devising effective strategies to address the challenges confronting traditional tattooing practices in Mentawai.

The decline in traditional tattooing practices among the Mentawai people serves as a poignant reminder of the fragility of cultural heritage in the face of modernization and societal change. Mentawai tattoos, known locally as "titi," are not merely superficial adornments but repositories of profound cultural significance and ancestral wisdom (Rossa, 2022). Embedded within the intricate motifs and symbols etched onto the skin are centuries-old narratives of identity, spirituality, and community belonging. The intricate art of Mentawai tattooing transcends mere aesthetic expression; it is a living testament to the rich tapestry of Mentawai culture and tradition. Each tattoo motif, meticulously crafted by skilled artisans,
serves as a visual ode to the values and beliefs cherished by the Mentawai people (Yulia, 2019). From depictions of flora and fauna to symbols of natural balance and spiritual connection, Mentawai tattoos encapsulate the essence of indigenous wisdom and reverence for the natural world.

At the heart of Mentawai tattooing tradition lies the figure of the Sikerei, revered elders endowed with the sacred duty of preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge (Yulia, 2018). As custodians of Mentawai customs and rituals, the Sikerei play a pivotal role in ensuring the continuity of tattooing practices and the preservation of cultural heritage. However, the dwindling number of Sikerei signals a looming threat to the vitality of Mentawai tattooing, necessitating urgent action to safeguard this intangible cultural treasure. The resurgence of interest in Mentawai tattoo batik, a contemporary adaptation of traditional tattoo motifs onto clothing, offers a glimmer of hope amidst the encroaching shadows of cultural loss. By integrating tattoo motifs into textiles, artisans and community members alike are actively engaged in revitalizing and reimagining traditional practices for a modern audience. This innovative approach not only ensures the preservation of tattooing traditions but also fosters cultural pride and economic empowerment within the Mentawai community. In essence, the decline in traditional tattooing practices among the Mentawai people serves as a clarion call for concerted efforts to safeguard and celebrate indigenous cultural heritage. By recognizing the intrinsic value of Mentawai tattoos as more than mere body art, we can honor the enduring legacy of ancestral wisdom and communal resilience embodied within each intricate design. Through collaborative initiatives and community-led initiatives, we can ensure that the vibrant tapestry of Mentawai culture continues to flourish for generations to come.

In the rich Mentawai culture, tattoos have long been revered as symbols of identity, spirituality and communal belonging. However, the evolving discourse around tattoos reflects broader changes in societal attitudes and values. Once considered a marker of social status and cultural affiliation, tattoos now have diverse roles, including personal expression, individuality, and aesthetic preferences (Olong, 2006). This transformation of discourse around tattoos reflects broader changes in Mentawai society, where traditional customs intersect with contemporary influences. As globalization and modernization exert their influence on remote island communities such as Mentawai, the younger generation is increasingly exposed to diverse cultural perspectives and global trends. Therefore, tattoos are no longer only seen from the perspective of tradition and cultural heritage, but are also considered as an expression of personal identity and style. Including the Islamic religion with its teachings, and other formal religions, they are considered Sasareu (outsiders). Body tattooing and the prohibition on consuming wild boar as part of Islamic rules are Sasareu rules which are contrary to Arat Mentawai (Delfi, 2013).

Moreover, the emergence of tattooing as a form of artistic expression and self-expression reflects the democratization of tattoo culture, transcending traditional boundaries of gender, age, and social status. In Mentawai, as elsewhere, tattoos have become a means of asserting autonomy and agency over one's body, challenging conventional notions of beauty and conformity. However, alongside these shifts in perception, traditional tattooing practices remain deeply rooted in Mentawai's cultural fabric, serving as enduring symbols of ancestral wisdom and spiritual connection. The symbiotic relationship between tradition and modernity is evident in the adaptation of traditional tattoo motifs onto contemporary mediums, such as clothing and accessories, reflecting a dynamic fusion of the old and the new.

In navigating this evolving landscape of tattoo culture, it is essential to recognize the diversity of perspectives and experiences that shape individual attitudes towards tattoos. While some may embrace tattoos as a form of self-expression and empowerment, others may adhere to traditional beliefs and customs surrounding tattooing. By engaging in open dialogue and fostering mutual respect for differing viewpoints, Mentawai society can honor its rich cultural heritage while embracing the complexities of modernity.

Amidst the rapid transformations reshaping Mentawai society, the preservation of traditional tattoo traditions stands as a poignant testament to the resilience of cultural heritage in the face of change. In Matotonan Village, nestled within the heart of Mentawai's archipelago, the convergence of tradition and innovation takes center stage in efforts to safeguard the legacy of Mentawai tattooing practices. At the forefront of this endeavor is the adaptation of traditional tattoo motifs into batik, a centuries-old textile art form renowned for its intricate patterns and vibrant colors (Nuralinanda & Zulfa, 2024). This creative fusion of traditional craftsmanship with contemporary design exemplifies the adaptive spirit of Mentawai culture, where age-old traditions are reimagined to resonate with modern sensibilities. By transposing
iconic tattoo motifs onto batik fabrics, artisans in Matotonan Village breathe new life into ancient symbols, infusing them with fresh vitality and relevance for present and future generations.

Moreover, this innovative approach not only ensures the preservation of Mentawai tattoo traditions but also democratizes access to cultural heritage, transcending geographical and generational boundaries. Through the medium of batik, Mentawai cultural identity is woven into the fabric of everyday life, enriching the tapestry of global cultural diversity with its vibrant hues and intricate designs. Yet, amidst the celebration of cultural revival, it is essential to recognize the nuanced discourse surrounding tattooing practices in Mentawai society. Beyond mere aesthetic expression, tattoos serve as repositories of cultural memory, embodying ancestral wisdom and spiritual connection. As such, understanding the socio-cultural, historical, and artistic dimensions of Mentawai tattoo traditions is paramount in navigating the complexities of cultural preservation in the modern age.

Through rigorous research and scholarly inquiry, this study endeavors to unravel the intricate layers of meaning embedded within Mentawai tattoo discourse, shedding light on the transformative potential of cultural preservation efforts in Matotonan Village and beyond. By engaging with the voices and perspectives of local communities, this research aims to amplify marginalized narratives and foster a deeper appreciation for the enduring legacy of Mentawai cultural heritage.

2. Method

The research methodology employed in this study aligns with qualitative research principles, as outlined by Moleong (2017), emphasizing an ethnographic approach and oral tradition methodology. To comprehensively investigate Mentawai tattoo traditions, the author conducted fieldwork across four islands within the Mentawai archipelago. While observations were conducted on all four islands, particular emphasis was placed on Siberut Island due to its significant presence of Sikerei, revered ritual performers adorned with traditional tattoos. In-depth observations were conducted on Siberut Island, providing rich insights into the cultural significance and practice of tattooing among the Mentawai community. The author engaged in immersive interviews with Sikerei from Matotonan village, located in the South Siberut district, to capture their perspectives on tattooing practices and the preservation of cultural heritage. Additionally, documentation studies were undertaken to document the experiences and narratives of Sikerei and community members invested in upholding Mentawai tattoo traditions.

Upon gathering data from fieldwork and interviews, the author proceeded with a systematic approach to data analysis. This involved data reduction, where the collected information was condensed and synthesized to address the research objectives effectively. Subsequently, the data were meticulously presented and analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions regarding the role of tattoo discourse in Matotonan Village and its implications for cultural preservation efforts in Mentawai. Overall, the methodological framework employed in this study facilitated a comprehensive exploration of Mentawai tattoo traditions, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the cultural, social, and historical dimensions underpinning tattoo discourse in Matotonan Village and beyond.

3. Result

In earlier times, tattoos held profound significance within Mentawai culture, serving as vital markers of rites of passage and social identity. Rooted deeply in tradition, tattooing was a sacred ceremony performed by skilled artisans known as Sipatiti, symbolizing the transition from childhood to adulthood. However, the advent of globalization has reshaped the landscape of tattoo culture, propelling it from the confines of local tradition to a global phenomenon (Olong, 2006). Previously confined to specific social groups and imbued with ritualistic meanings, tattoos have now permeated mainstream culture, shedding their exclusivity and embracing diverse interpretations. No longer bound by traditional symbolism, tattoos have emerged as potent symbols of individuality and style, transcending cultural boundaries and societal norms. This shift from ritualistic to pop culture underscores a broader societal shift towards self-expression and personal identity (Olong, 2006).

As tattoos have transitioned from sacred symbols to fashion statements, they have undergone a remarkable evolution in both form and function. What was once a cultural marker with deep spiritual significance has transformed into a canvas for artistic expression, encompassing a myriad of designs and styles reflective of contemporary aesthetics. From traditional motifs to avant-garde imagery, tattoos have
become a medium for self-expression and creativity, catering to a diverse array of tastes and preferences (Olong, 2006). Yet, amidst this evolution, the essence of tattoo culture remains deeply rooted in cultural heritage and tradition. While the outward appearance of tattoos may have changed, their underlying significance as markers of identity and personal narrative endures. In Mentawai, where tattooing has been a revered tradition for generations, the cultural significance of tattoos transcends mere fashion trends, serving as tangible links to the past and guardians of cultural memory (Olong, 2006). In essence, the evolution of tattoo culture reflects the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity, tradition and innovation. As tattoos continue to evolve and adapt to changing societal norms, they serve as potent symbols of cultural resilience and adaptation, bridging past and present, tradition and contemporary expression. In Mentawai and beyond, the legacy of tattoo culture endures as a testament to the enduring power of human creativity and cultural expression.

In Mentawai, a region steeped in rich cultural heritage, the time-honored tradition of tattooing faces a formidable challenge: dwindling interest among the younger generation. As the winds of modernization sweep through the archipelago, traditional customs and practices, including tattooing, find themselves at a crossroads. Despite concerted efforts to safeguard these cherished traditions, the allure of contemporary lifestyles and external influences pose significant threats to the preservation of Mentawai tattoo culture. One notable consequence of this cultural shift is the gradual disappearance of skilled practitioners, known as Sikerei, who have long been the custodians of Mentawai tattooing. With only a fraction of the population still actively practicing the art of tattooing, the vibrant tapestry of Mentawai tattoo culture is in danger of unraveling (Ady Rosa, 2022). The decline in tattooing can be traced back to government interventions dating as far back as 1957, when prohibitions were imposed on certain animist practices, including traditional tattooing rituals. These restrictions, coupled with the imposition of mainstream religions, have contributed to the erosion of traditional cultural practices and values.

Despite these challenges, the resilience of Mentawai tattoo culture endures. Efforts to document and perpetuate these ancient traditions persist, driven by a recognition of their cultural significance and historical legacy (Ady Rosa, 2022). Through initiatives such as the adaptation of tattoo motifs into batik clothing, the essence of Mentawai tattoo culture continues to find new expressions, bridging the past with the present. However, the road ahead remains fraught with uncertainty, as the forces of modernization and globalization continue to exert their influence on traditional ways of life. In the face of these challenges, it becomes increasingly vital to reaffirm the value of traditional knowledge and cultural heritage. By celebrating and preserving Mentawai tattoo culture, not only do we honor the legacy of our ancestors, but we also enrich the cultural tapestry of our shared humanity. Through collaborative efforts between local communities, scholars, and cultural advocates, we can work towards ensuring that the flame of Mentawai tattoo culture continues to burn bright, illuminating the path for generations to come.

The intricate tattoo motifs adorning the hands and feet of Sikerei, traditional elders of the Mentawai tribe, serve as captivating visual narratives, each symbolizing a unique facet of Mentawai cultural heritage. These tattoos, meticulously etched into the skin, represent a profound connection to ancestral traditions and spiritual beliefs, embodying centuries-old wisdom and cultural significance. On the hands of the Sikerei, the tattoo motifs form a striking tableau, depicting sacred symbols and geometric patterns that speak to the spiritual journey and rites of passage undergone by these revered figures. Each line and curve tells a story, weaving together elements of nature, folklore, and ritualistic practices passed down through generations. Similarly, the tattoos adorning the feet of the Sikerei are imbued with deep symbolic meaning, serving as a testament to their role as guardians of Mentawai cultural heritage. These intricate designs, often depicting motifs inspired by the natural world, such as flora and fauna indigenous to the Mentawai Islands, evoke a sense of reverence and connection to the land.

As guardians of traditional knowledge and cultural practices, the Sikerei carry the weight of their ancestors’ legacy upon their skin, their tattoos serving as a visual testament to the resilience and endurance of Mentawai culture. Through these intricate designs, the Sikerei bridge the gap between past and present, embodying the timeless spirit of Mentawai cultural heritage for future generations to behold and cherish.
Figure 1. Tattoo Motifs on Sikerei’s Hands and Feet (Source: Zulfa Document)

The image captures a distinctive tattoo motif, emblematic of the rich cultural heritage of the Mentawai tribe. This particular motif, characterized by its intricate patterns and symbolic significance, holds a revered place in Mentawai tradition and is poised to be transformed into Mentawai batik tattoo—a testament to the enduring legacy of Mentawai tattooing practices. Displayed on the arm of Sikerei Stevanus in Matotonan village, this tattoo motif exemplifies the artistry and spiritual depth inherent in Mentawai tattoo culture. Each line and curve of the design carries profound meaning, reflecting the interconnectedness of nature, spirituality, and community within Mentawai society. As an embodiment of ancestral wisdom and cultural identity, the tattoo motif on Sikerei Stevanus’s arm serves as a visual reminder of the traditions and values passed down through generations. Its presence on his skin signifies his role as a custodian of Mentawai heritage, entrusted with preserving and perpetuating the cultural practices of his ancestors. Through the meticulous artistry of Mentawai tattooing, this motif transcends mere decoration, offering a window into the collective consciousness of the Mentawai people. Its transfer to cloth in the form of Mentawai batik tattoo not only ensures its preservation for future generations but also celebrates its significance as a symbol of resilience, identity, and cultural continuity in the face of modernization and change.

The specific tattoo design adorning the arm of a Sikerei, or traditional shaman, within the Mentawai community. This tattoo motif holds profound cultural and spiritual significance, serving as a visual representation of the individual’s connection to Mentawai traditions and ancestral heritage. In the accompanying image, the tattoo motif on the Sikerei’s arm is depicted with intricate detail and precision, showcasing the artistry and craftsmanship characteristic of Mentawai tattooing practices. The design comprises a series of symbolic elements, each carrying its own meaning rooted in Mentawai cosmology and belief systems. The motifs etched onto the Sikerei’s arm may include representations of flora, fauna, celestial bodies, and sacred symbols, all intricately woven together to form a cohesive narrative that speaks to the individual’s role within Mentawai society. These tattoos often serve as markers of identity, indicating the wearer’s status, lineage, and spiritual authority within the community. Furthermore, the placement of the tattoo on the arm holds significance within Mentawai culture, symbolizing strength, protection, and spiritual
empowerment. As the Sikerei performs sacred rituals and mediates between the human and spirit worlds, the tattoo on their arm serves as a conduit for spiritual energy and ancestral guidance. Overall, the tattoo motive on the Sikerei’s arm represents more than just a decorative design; it encapsulates centuries of tradition, wisdom, and cultural heritage passed down through generations. Through its intricate details and symbolic imagery, this tattoo motif embodies the essence of Mentawai identity and spirituality, serving as a visual testament to the enduring legacy of Mentawai tattooing practices.

The images presented above showcase a diverse array of tattoo motifs traditionally worn by individuals within the Mentawai community. These intricate designs, meticulously crafted and steeped in cultural significance, serve as a visual testament to the rich heritage of Mentawai tattooing practices. However, in light of contemporary challenges and changing cultural dynamics, there arises a pressing need to preserve and safeguard these timeless traditions for future generations. One innovative approach to this preservation effort is the translation of these tattoo motifs into Mentawai batik, a textile art form synonymous with Indonesian culture. By transferring these intricate tattoo designs onto cloth, artisans can immortalize the essence of Mentawai tattooing in a tangible and enduring medium. The resulting Mentawai batik not only pays homage to the ancient art of tattooing but also serves as a poignant reminder of Mentawai cultural identity and resilience in the face of modernization.

The process of translating tattoo motifs into Mentawai batik involves careful attention to detail and a deep understanding of traditional symbolism. Artisans meticulously replicate each intricate line and pattern, ensuring that the essence and integrity of the original tattoo design are faithfully preserved. Through this meticulous craftsmanship, Mentawai batik emerges as a vibrant tapestry of cultural heritage, bridging the gap between past and present, tradition and innovation. Moreover, Mentawai batik serves as a tangible link to the ancestral wisdom and spiritual beliefs embedded within these timeless tattoo motifs. Each batik motif carries with it a rich tapestry of meanings and narratives, reflecting the interconnectedness of Mentawai culture with the natural world and spiritual realms. As such, the preservation of these motifs through Mentawai batik represents not only an aesthetic endeavor but also a profound act of cultural stewardship and reverence. In essence, the creation of Mentawai batik from tattoo motifs represents a holistic effort to safeguard and celebrate Mentawai cultural heritage. By transforming ephemeral body art into enduring textile masterpieces, artisans ensure that the legacy of Mentawai tattooing lives on, inspiring future generations to cherish and honor their cultural roots. Through Mentawai batik, the spirit of tattooing

Figure 2. Tattoo Motive on Sikerei’s Arm (Source: Zulfa Document)
transcends time and space, weaving a narrative of resilience, identity, and cultural pride for generations to come.

5. Discussion

The disappearance of traditional tattooing practices in Sioban village, Mentawai Islands district, reflects broader challenges facing the preservation of Mentawai cultural heritage. Rituals and practices associated with Sikerei, traditional tattoo practitioners, have gradually faded away in Sioban, signaling the loss of a once-vibrant cultural tradition. Despite the decline of tattooing in the village, efforts to preserve Mentawai tattoo traditions persist, driven by the local government’s proactive measures (Yulia et al., 2018). In response to the dwindling tattoo tradition, the Sioban village government has implemented various strategies to safeguard Mentawai cultural heritage. Firstly, the government has initiated Mentawai tattoo batik training programs, providing local artisans with the necessary skills to translate traditional tattoo motifs into batik textiles. These training initiatives aim to revive interest in Mentawai tattooing practices and promote the continuation of this ancient art form.

Additionally, the government serves as a facilitator for tattoo batik groups, supporting the development of home industries focused on producing Mentawai batik. By fostering collaboration between artisans and providing logistical support, the government creates opportunities for economic empowerment while preserving cultural traditions. Furthermore, the government acts as a mediator in securing funding from the Mentawai District Government to sustain cultural initiatives. Through strategic partnerships and advocacy efforts, the local government seeks to allocate resources towards the preservation of Mentawai tattoo traditions, recognizing their intrinsic value to the community’s cultural identity.

In parallel, the cultural community in Sioban village plays a vital role in supporting preservation efforts. Through active participation in cultural festivals and engagement with traditional practices, community members contribute to the transmission of cultural knowledge and values across generations. However, despite these concerted efforts, challenges persist in preserving Mentawai tattoo traditions. Modernization and shifting societal values pose significant obstacles to the continuation of traditional practices, while a lack of interest among the younger generation further compounds the issue. The reluctance of youth to engage with traditional tattooing practices reflects broader trends of cultural disconnection and the erosion of intergenerational knowledge transmission.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that combines cultural education, community engagement, and policy support. By fostering greater awareness and appreciation for Mentawai cultural heritage and providing avenues for youth involvement, stakeholders can work towards revitalizing tattoo traditions and ensuring their enduring legacy in Mentawai society. In the Sipora area there are already batik tattoos made by the PKK women’s group. The motives they created include:

![Figure 3. Combined Tattoo Motifs (Source: Zulfa Document)](image-url)
The showcased batik tattoo motif, characterized by intricate flora and plant designs, exemplifies the creative fusion of traditional Mentawai tattoo motifs with the artistry of batik textiles. Produced by a collective of mothers in Sido Makmur village, located in the Sipora region of Mentawai, this particular motif reflects the ingenuity and craftsmanship of local artisans. Through their collaborative efforts, these artisans have transformed traditional tattoo motifs into visually captivating patterns that adorn batik fabrics. The incorporation of flora and plant imagery in the batik tattoo motif signifies a deep-rooted connection to nature, a central aspect of Mentawai cultural identity. In Mentawai society, the natural environment holds profound significance, serving as a source of spiritual inspiration and cultural symbolism. By integrating botanical elements into the batik tattoo motif, artisans pay homage to the rich biodiversity of the Mentawai Islands and celebrate the symbiotic relationship between humans and nature.

Beyond its aesthetic appeal, the batik tattoo motif carries layers of meaning and cultural significance. Each botanical motif may hold symbolic associations, representing concepts such as growth, renewal, and resilience. Moreover, the production of batik textiles with tattoo motifs serves as a form of cultural preservation, ensuring the continuity of Mentawai tattoo traditions in the face of modernization and cultural change. In addition to floral motifs, Mentawai batik tattoo designs encompass a diverse array of patterns and symbols, each with its own unique narrative and cultural context. These motifs may draw inspiration from traditional Mentawai tattoo designs, such as animal figures, geometric patterns, and ancestral symbols. Through the reinterpretation of these motifs in the medium of batik, artisans reinterpret and adapt ancient tattooing practices to suit contemporary artistic sensibilities.

The proliferation of batik tattoo motifs reflects a broader trend of innovation and adaptation within Mentawai cultural expression. As artisans explore new techniques and materials, they breathe new life into age-old traditions, ensuring their relevance and resonance in modern times. By embracing the intersection of tradition and innovation, Mentawai communities uphold their cultural heritage while embracing opportunities for creative expression and economic empowerment.

The Jaraik motif represents another significant endeavor in the preservation of Mentawai tattoo traditions through the art of batik. This motif, prominently featured in batik tattoo designs, exemplifies the meticulous craftsmanship and cultural significance embedded within Mentawai artistic expression. Produced by local artisans as part of a burgeoning home industry, the Jaraik motif serves as both a means of cultural preservation and economic empowerment for the community. Through the production of batik textiles adorned with Jaraik motifs, artisans contribute to the conservation of Mentawai tattoo traditions while simultaneously generating income for themselves and their families. This home industry not only sustains traditional artistic practices but also provides opportunities for socio-economic development within the local community. By fostering entrepreneurship and skill development, the batik tattoo motif home industry empowers individuals to harness their creative talents and cultural heritage for sustainable livelihoods.
Moreover, the promotion of batik tattoo motifs on a national and international scale holds the potential to elevate Mentawai cultural identity and heritage onto the global stage. By showcasing the unique artistry and symbolism of Mentawai tattoos through batik textiles, artisans introduce audiences worldwide to the rich cultural tapestry of the Mentawai Islands. Through exhibitions, trade fairs, and collaborations with cultural institutions, the batik tattoo motif industry can foster greater appreciation and recognition for Mentawai cultural heritage beyond local borders. In essence, the production of batik textiles featuring Jaraik motifs represents a multifaceted effort to preserve, promote, and celebrate Mentawai tattoo traditions. By marrying traditional tattoo motifs with the versatile medium of batik, artisans bridge the gap between past and present, tradition and innovation. In doing so, they not only safeguard the legacy of Mentawai tattoos for future generations but also cultivate a renewed sense of pride and identity within the community.

5. Conclusion

The extinction of traditional tattoo practices in various regions of Mentawai has posed a significant challenge to the preservation of this cultural heritage. However, amidst this decline, the initiative to translate tattoo motifs into batik textiles emerges as a promising avenue for inheritance and cultural continuity. By adapting traditional tattoo designs into batik, artisans endeavor to safeguard the legacy of Mentawai tattoos and ensure their transmission to future generations. This research underscores the significance of Mentawai tattoo batik as a tangible means of preserving and perpetuating tattoo traditions in Mentawai. Through a qualitative ethnographic approach and oral tradition, this research delves into the intricate process of creating Mentawai tattoo batik and its cultural significance. Interviews with tattoo owners, particularly Sikerei, the custodians of Mentawai rituals, shed light on the sacred nature of tattoos within Mentawai society. The transfer of tattoo motifs onto clothing symbolizes a deliberate effort to immortalize these sacred symbols and ensure their inheritance by younger Mentawai generations.

Furthermore, the integration of tattoo motifs into batik textiles not only preserves traditional art forms but also revitalizes cultural practices within the community. The sacred connection between tattoos and the flora and fauna of Mentawai reflects the deeply rooted cultural beliefs and spiritual significance attributed to these symbols. By perpetuating these motifs through batik, artisans pay homage to Mentawai cultural heritage while adapting to contemporary modes of expression. In conclusion, the discourse surrounding Mentawai tattoo batik exemplifies the transformative power of culture in preserving and enhancing traditional practices. Through creative adaptation and innovation, Mentawai artisans strive to ensure the survival and evolution of tattoo traditions, transcending the limitations of time and societal change. The preservation of these sacred symbols not only honors the legacy of Mentawai ancestors but also fosters a sense of identity and belonging within the community, ensuring that the rich cultural heritage of Mentawai endures for generations to come.

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

We affirm that there are no conflicts of interest that could influence the impartiality, honesty, or interpretation of the study's results. We voluntarily acknowledge that no financial, personal, or professional affiliations could unfairly impact the conduct or reporting of this study. Our research was conducted ethically and with genuine intentions, free from any external influences seeking to provide monetary or other support for the study's outcomes. Every aspect of the investigation, data analysis, and decision-making process was carried out independently, without interference from any parties that could sway the results. Moreover, we emphasize that this study adhered to all relevant laws, guidelines, and standards within the scientific field. We are committed to maintaining academic integrity and professionalism throughout the inquiry, ensuring that readers receive accurate and reliable information. Consequently, we are confident that this investigation was conducted openly and honestly, without any conflicts of interest that could compromise the trustworthiness or integrity of its findings. Our goal is for this research to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in related disciplines. We are available to provide further clarification or information if necessary.
References


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