

Blacksmith: Between history, culture, and economy

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Abstract

This research was aimed at describing the historical, cultural, and economic value of blacksmith activities. The research method used was a literature study (library research). Data collection techniques were carried out through collecting research results that had been carried out and published in reputable indexed journals, Google Scholar, etc. The research results showed that blacksmithing had historical value whose development varied in each region of the world. In Asia, especially Indonesia, the historical development of blacksmithing was estimated to have existed since the 7th century AD. This was based on findings on temple wall reliefs, inscriptions, and ancient manuscripts found as relics from the royal era. Meanwhile, the historical development of blacksmiths in Europe, Africa, and other Asian regions was quite diverse, having developed from 1150-1400 BC. The blacksmiths of Dokdak Village also had cultural values that were very important to be passed on. This was based on data which showed that in blacksmithing activities there were cultural elements, namely the knowledge system, livelihood system, and equipment and technology systems used. Furthermore, Dokdak Village's blacksmith activities had economic value, because the carried-out activities could produce production goods that have economic value. Based on this, it is important to protect and maintain the livelihood of blacksmiths to pass on values to the younger generation.

Keywords: blacksmithing; culture; economy; history; values

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INTRODUCTION

Blacksmithing is a livelihood that has existed for a long time in Indonesia. This is based on data from previous research which shows that metal processing techniques in the Java region have existed since pre-Hindu times and were passed down from generation to generation until the classical period (Haryono, 2001; Supriyanto, 2011). Apart from that, it was explained that the existence of blacksmiths can be seen in the reliefs of the temple on the slopes of Mount Lawu, namely Sukuh Temple. This 15th-century temple relief depicts the tools they used and how they worked. Then, information related to blacksmithing can also be seen in inscriptions found in Central Java and East Java which are estimated to have existed around 890 AD-1323 AD (Tawakal, 2022). In the Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian manuscript which dates from the 16th century, it is stated that one of the people's livelihoods at that time consisted of painters, *Pande dang* (copper furniture makers), *pande mas* (master craftsmen), *pande wesi* (blacksmith), *Pande Glang* (bracelet master), *medu wayang* (puppet maker) and others (Suryana *et.al.*, 2023). Furthermore, in the development of science and technology in the world, metal processing techniques have been known since the 6th-7th century AD, especially by Muslim scientists, namely Salman Al Farisi and Khabab bin Art. Meanwhile, in Europe, it only appeared around the 17th-18th century AD (Pramono & Syuriah, 2018). Then, the results of previous research showed that the livelihood of blacksmiths was not only found in Indonesia but in almost all regions of the world. One of them is the North Dakota region, United States. It is said that blacksmith craftsmen have a very important role, especially in meeting household needs, as well as helping development activities in the area (Vore, 1990; Suryana *et al.*, 2023).

Based on the explanation above, it shows that blacksmithing as a livelihood that still exists today has very significant historical value to be conveyed to the younger generation. Apart from that, a livelihood as a blacksmith also has cultural values that are equally important to convey to today's young generation. It is said to have cultural value because blacksmithing is a form of livelihood and is closely related to the use of technology in meeting human needs (Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022).

From an economic perspective, blacksmithing, as one of the livelihoods that is still carried out today, has very high economic value in meeting people's living needs. This is based on data available in the field, one of which is the Dokdak Village blacksmith group in Ciamis Regency, showing that daily blacksmith activities can generate income of around IDR 80,000-IDR 300,000. Even in another group, Dokdak Village blacksmith craftsmen can produce items in the form of three small kitchen knives or 60 pieces. If we calculate the income of blacksmith craftsmen in this group, they earn IDR 240,000 a day. Based on this, the blacksmith's livelihood has high economic value when it is managed well and receives attention from the local government.

However, in reality, the existence of blacksmith craftsmen in every region of Indonesia has decreased. It is slowly starting to be abandoned because it is considered as not following current developments. This condition is caused by several factors, starting from internal factors of the craftsmen, as well as external factors, namely the lack of attention of the relevant parties to maintain and preserve their livelihood activities as blacksmiths.

Based on this, a deeper study was carried out regarding the values contained in the livelihood of Dokdak Village blacksmiths. This aim was to describe the historical, cultural, and economic value of blacksmithing activities as an effort to transfer knowledge to the younger generation regarding the values contained in this livelihood.

METHODS

The current research carried out library research. A literature review is a research technique by carries out searches related to the concept of blacksmithing between history, culture, and economics. The research used a qualitative approach because the produced data was descriptive, while the type of research used library research, namely research that was based on a study of writings or libraries that were appropriate and relevant to the research. This research was conducted through a variety of library information (books, encyclopedias, scientific journals, newspapers, magazines, and documents) (Adlini, et al., 2022).

The literature study method used in this research was considered more effective for analyzing blacksmiths between history, culture, and economics. The research began by collecting sources of research data related to the historical, cultural, and economic value of blacksmiths. To strengthen the data obtained, this research was supported by other sources related to the historical development of blacksmiths in Indonesia and the world. The supporting data related to the historical development of blacksmiths in this research activity were data sources on the history of blacksmiths from Asia, Europe, and Africa, with developments starting from 1500 BC (first use of iron), 1100 BC (the Hittites from Anatolia who were controlled by West Asians), 1000 BC, (Greeks, Egyptians, Jews, Romans, Carthaginians, and Assyrians began to study iron smelting). 800 BC, (India succeeded in making iron after the Aryans arrived). 700 - 600 BC (China learned to make iron). 400 - 500 BC (Europe had discovered steel). 250 BC (Indians discovered how to make steel). In 1000 AD, (the Fatim Empire produced Damascus steel), but in 1300 AD it disappeared. 1700 AD, (Europe re-researched the use and manufacture of steel).

These sources were obtained from reputable indexed journals, Google Scholar, books, direct interviews, and websites. The data source is 6 articles from reputable indexed journals, 14 articles from Google Scholar, 4 book sources, 2 direct interviews with craftsmen, and 5 website sources. The data that had been collected were then analyzed qualitatively using an inductive approach concerning existing problems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Historical value of blacksmiths

The historical development of blacksmiths in each region was different. In Indonesia, the history of blacksmithing can be seen and understood through historical relics found in temple reliefs, inscriptions, and manuscripts left over from the royal era (Suryana & Pajriah, 2024). In the Ciamis District in particular, the history of blacksmithing can be seen in the Sanghyang Siksa Kandang Karesian (SSKK) manuscript which was written in the 15th century. This manuscript was written about the work of the Sundanese/Galuh people during the kingdom period, one of which was as *pande wsi* (blacksmith) (Suryana, *et al.*, 2023). Meanwhile, in several regions in the world the historical development of blacksmiths is different, starting from the 6th millennium and developing since 2000 BC, then 1000 BC, then 1200-1400 BC, and before 1150 BC (Wertime, 1964; Sherby & Wadsworth, 2001; Mackenzie, 2008; Riposan & Stan, 2023; Suryana & Pajriah, 2024).

Then, the history of the use of iron and steel lasted for thousands of years and involved many civilizations in various regions of the world. In 1500 BC, iron was first discovered and used by humans, but its initial use was still limited. In 1100 BC, the Hittites from ancient Anatolia, whose secrets of making iron for 400 years were controlled by the people of West Asia, so that the process of smelting iron became more widely known. In 1000 BC, the Greeks, Egyptians, Jews, Romans, Carthaginians, and Assyrians also began to study iron smelting and use it in everyday life. In 800 BC, India succeeded in making iron after being invaded by the Aryans. In 700 - 600 BC, China learned to make iron. In 400 - 500 BC, the use of steel was discovered in Europe. In 250 BC, the Indians discovered how to make steel. In 1000 AD, steel mixed with other elements was first discovered when the Fatim Empire produced Damascus steel. In 1300 AD, the secret of making Damascus steel was lost. In 1700 AD, in Europe, research and development in the use and manufacture of steel continued (Siswanto & Samlawi, 2016).

The explanation regarding the history of the development of blacksmithing, apart from being stated based on the sources above, was also explained based on the perspective of the Al-Quran. The word iron in the Al-Quran was mentioned 6 times in different letters and verses, namely *Surah al-Isra* verse 50, *al-Kahf* verse 96, *al-Hajj* verse 21, *Saba'* verse 10, *Qaff* verse 22 and *al-Hadid* verse 25 (Anggara, *et.al.*, 2023). Apart from the Al-Quran, explanations regarding iron are also found in the *hadiid*. One example was that the term *hadiid* or iron was found quite a lot in several hadiths, such as in the book of Sahih Bukhari, 91 hadiths are found that use the word *hadiid*. The *hadiid* also explains the benefits of iron for human life, both as equipment and for health (Salmah, 2016).

The cultural value of blacksmiths

Blacksmithing is a livelihood that has diverse values, and it is important to pass it on to future generations. In previous research activities, researchers only studied the role of blacksmiths in one value, especially in economic value. Meanwhile, other values are still rarely studied. Through the carried-out research activities, new findings were obtained regarding the cultural and historical value of the blacksmith's livelihood.

Blacksmithing from a cultural perspective was seen based on the elements contained in culture. As explained by some researchers, culture is a way of life of people that are passed down from one generation to another through various learning processes to create a way of life that suits the environment (Zwell, 2000; Syakhrani & Kamil, 2022). Then, culture is also defined as a set of human knowledge as social creatures that is used to understand the environment and experiences, and is used as a form of behavior (Putra, 2003). Furthermore, according to (Koentjaraningrat, 1993; Sumarto, 2019) culture comes from Sanskrit, namely *Budhayah*, which means the result of the power of human reason which is still implemented today.

Based on the explanation above, it is very clear that the blacksmith's livelihood had very high cultural value because this livelihood was a form of the result of the power of the human mind. Furthermore, the elements of culture consisted of seven elements, namely language systems, knowledge systems, social organization systems, equipment systems life and technology, economic

systems and livelihoods, religious systems, and arts (Luth, 1994). Of these seven elements, three elements were inherent in blacksmithing activities, namely the knowledge system, the equipment and technology system used, and the livelihood system.

The knowledge system in blacksmithing was closely related to the system of equipment and technology used because to be able to make equipment or technology requires extensive knowledge, especially related to human ideas. Blacksmithing required knowledge and skills that not everyone had. The knowledge system in blacksmithing was closely related to the system of equipment and technology used because to be able to make equipment or technology required extensive knowledge, especially related to human ideas. Blacksmithing required knowledge and skills that not everyone had. Types of equipment and technology systems, namely, production tools, weapons, containers, etc. Meanwhile, the elements of the livelihood system in blacksmithing were very clear, that blacksmithing was one of the activities/work carried out to fulfill human life needs (Yulianti, 2022).

Economic value of blacksmiths

Apart from having historical and cultural value, a livelihood as a blacksmith also had economic value. The economic value of the blacksmith's livelihood was one part of the local economy of rural communities that supports the national economy. The results of previous research showed that the blacksmith's livelihood had a positive impact on the economic development of the community (Hayana, 2022).

Apart from that, field data shows that the blacksmith's livelihood could generate an average income of between IDR 80,000 and IDR 300,000 per day. Research conducted by Kufita & Luthfi (2022) stated that a livelihood as a blacksmith was a business opportunity that could be done at this time, this was based on the need for agricultural tools which was still considered very high. Then, Dukomalamo (2013) explained that the livelihood of blacksmiths was carried out to meet economic needs both individually and in groups.

Sari & Murtedjo (2016) explained that the existence of the steel industry in Dimoro Hamlet had a big and positive impact on the surrounding community, namely family values that were still well established, good community interaction, and awareness of the high quality of education. Apart from that, the steel industry was also able to increase people's income, especially for affected communities. In the article, Maruto & Romadhoni, (2021) said that the economy of the village community which was located right on the edge of the Kampar River, Kampar Regency, Riau Province, which had the majority of blacksmith craftsmen, remained well maintained during the pandemic. According to Sitompul (2017) blacksmithing was not merely an economic value that was taken into account, but was influenced by other factors such as kinship relationships, more promising livelihoods, a legacy of knowledge passed down from generation to generation, social relations, and artistic values that are always upheld by every worker. Sahril (2021) believed that the blacksmith business had enormous economic opportunities in the Siak area, Riau.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the Dokdak Village blacksmith had historical value, cultural value, and economic value. The historical value of blacksmithing was that blacksmithing had existed for millions of years, with different developments in every region of the world. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the Dokdak Village blacksmith had historical value, cultural value, and economic value. The historical value of blacksmithing was that blacksmithing has existed for millions of years, with different developments in every region of the world. In Indonesia, the history of the development of blacksmithing could be seen in temple wall reliefs, inscriptions, and royal manuscripts. Then, blacksmithing had cultural values, namely that in the blacksmith's livelihood there were cultural elements, including the knowledge system, the equipment and technology system used, as well as the livelihood system. Meanwhile, the economic value in blacksmithing was that the blacksmith could produce products that have economic value which are used to fulfill human needs.

Limitations and Future Direction

The current research expands the literature regarding the historical, cultural and economic value of Dokdak Village blacksmiths. In this case, there are still limitations to the research carried out, namely related to the use of limited data sources. In future research, it will be made more specific by making direct observations regarding existing problems.

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Declarations

We, as the authors of this article, declare that the article manuscript submitted is original has never been published and is not being considered for publication in another journal. We will not withdraw unilaterally without notifying the editor, especially if the manuscript is in the peer-review process.

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