

# The Local Wisdom of Using Wasted Raw Material as Food Source and Turning It into Culinary Tourism Object in Pekalongan City

*Indira Maharania Rauf<sup>1</sup> R.Aj. Atrinawati<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Humanities, Diponegoro University, Semarang Indonesia.

`atrinawati@lecturer.undip.ac.id`

**Abstract.** Available and abundant but unused or unwanted raw material becomes an environmental problem that can be solved through local wisdom. Pekalongan City's people show their local wisdom of handling wasted raw material in their surroundings by utilising it as a beneficial food source, processing it into delicious side dishes, and turning it into a profitable commercial product. This research is done by using folklore field research to collect and analyse the data. The result shows that goat offal as wasted raw material can be turned into legendary traditional culinary tourism reflecting the local people's local wisdom that saves their environment, maintains their culture, and supports their local business.

**Keywords:** local wisdom, wasted raw material, traditional culinary tourism, Pekalongan City

## 1 Introduction

Javanese civilisation covers complex culture along with its local wisdom. The local wisdom is reflected in the idea of exploring natural resources. The utilisation of abundant but wasted raw material as a food source that can be processed into decent meals reflects how they optimise their creativity to maximise food source potency. Their creativity expands when they realise the economic value of the tasty meal by selling it as a profitable commercial product. When meals made of wasted raw materials become popular, they develop culinary business as part of the city tourism. The idea of transforming wasted raw materials into decent meals with high economic value, the act of not wasting any kind of raw material to save food sources, and the creation of culinary products show a culture which can be defined as "a complete system of ideas, acts, and human being creation for their society" [1].

Tradition is part of a culture that is practised by the society. The tradition of utilising wasted raw material as a food source shows people's local wisdom of keeping their natural resources. The idea of processing it into a decent meal and then passing the recipe to the next generation makes them keep their cultural identity as the same society who do the same act for the same creation. As culture is a human being's "knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom, and capabilities or habits in their society" [2], the tradition of utilizing wasted raw material as a food source belongs to culture as it shows

people's knowledge of utilizing it, the custom of not wasting it, capabilities of processing it into decent meal, and habits of consuming it as a culinary object.

This research shows H. Zarkasi's local wisdom by utilizing goat offal as wasted raw material by creatively processing it into traditional cuisine named *uwet* and developing *nasi uwet* as a legendary culinary tourism object. This local wisdom must be maintained by the city's local people and local government to keep their cultural identity, natural resources, and additional income from the tourism business.

## 2 Theoretical Background

Since culture reflects human beings' experiences that can be derived from their ancestors -in a more or less organising form- and can be learned or created by them in their society [3], the way Pekalongan City's local people make use of wasted raw material as a food source, process it into a delicious side dish and promote it as commercial product shows their culture and local wisdom. It also shows how they experience an environmental problem of available and abundant, but unused or unwanted raw material, and how they solve the problem by creating specific methods of turning it into a side dish with high economic and cultural value.

Culture and local wisdom are created by the old generation, learned by the new generation, and passed down to the next generation to keep its benefit for the society. If it is neglected, forgotten, or abandoned; it can be lost, only if kept by minorities, or practised by other societies as the change of politics, economy, and social condition and the change of people's attitude toward culture might reduce the culture's value, usage, and respect [4].

The effort of maintaining culture must be supported to keep the cultural identity that is integrated into society's daily life. The creation of traditional cuisine made of wasted raw material and the development of traditional cuisine into a tourism object reflects the seven elements of culture [2]. The traditional cuisine is served as a cultural product that is integrated into the society's (1) religious system and ceremonies, (2) organization and society systems, (3) knowledge system, (4) language, (5) art, (6) livelihood system, as well as (7) technology and tools system.

This research shows Pekalongan City's local people's local wisdom of utilising goat offal as wasted raw material that can be processed into *uwet* as a high-value side dish and their tradition of consuming *nasi uwet* as culinary items reflecting the seven elements of Javanese culture, particularly Pekalongan City's local people's culture.

## 3 Methodology

This is descriptive and qualitative research because it shows H. Zarkasi's effort as Pekalongan City's local people to maintain the city's culture by keeping the life of the traditional cuisine, preserving the city's environment by using goat offal as a food

source and improving the local people's economy by promoting *uwet* as a traditional culinary object. "Nasi Uwet" H. Zarkasi food stall was chosen using the Purposive Sampling Technique [5] selecting food stalls with traditional cuisine made of wasted raw material was established as Pekalongan City's legendary traditional culinary tourism object.

The data were obtained and analysed using Dundes [6] two Folklore Methods: empirical Identification and objective Interpretation. From the first method, the data were obtained using the Documentation Method [7]. Participatory Observation, Note Taking, and Recording Techniques [7] were implemented through library research, observation, interviews and questionnaires. The library research was done by reviewing local and national documentation of the research object, the field observation was done by visiting the food stall, the interview was done by interviewing the food stall management, and the questionnaire was given to the food stall visitors. The whole methods and techniques were applied to support the interpretation of the research object.

Meanwhile, from the second method, the researcher presents the interpretation of the obtained data from the first method that reflects a comprehensive explanation of the history, the ingredients, the way it is cooked, the way it is served, the way it is consumed, and the way it attracts local people and visitors from other cities to taste it as a culinary product. The analysis is served in a description of the researcher's interpretation of the research data. The following sub-chapter provides the findings and the discussion of the research data interpretation.

## **4 Finding and Discussion**

### **4.1 Finding**

From the library review, observation, and interview, the researcher found out that *uwet* was first invented by H. Zarkasi in the 1950s when he knew that Arabic ethnic, as one of the three ethnics who inhabit Pekalongan City besides Chinese and Javanese, has a tradition of consuming goat meat to follow their ancestors' tradition in the origin country. When the primary goat meat was utilised as the premium raw material for their daily consumption or special menu on their religious celebration; the unused or unwanted raw material, such as the head, the legs, and the internal organs, became wasted raw material that was left behind.

When the skin was utilised as the raw material of leather fashion and *bedug* (Javanese) cover or Javanese traditional small drum that is sounded five times a day in *langgar* (Javanese) or small mosque to mark Islamic five times prayer, the head was processed as roasted goat head, and the legs were processed as *dengkil* (Javanese traditional food made of animal's legs or knuckles, such as cow and goat) soup; the internal organs were

commonly processed into *gule* or Javanese traditionally soup made of coconut milk with a kind of curry seasoning.

H. Zarkasi knew that goat meat, especially its internal organs, has already been processed into common traditional food containing high cholesterol levels with *prengus* (Javanese) smell or typical goat meat smell. Processed food becomes underrated although its taste is delicious as it is made of wasted material with a bad smell and bad effect on human health. His idea of differently processing it into more hygienic and healthier food by deeply cleaning the raw material, cooking it without coconut milk, and adding it with the goat meat to increase its value as a decent meal, bearing an invention of food made of goat internal organs that are clean, healthy, and classy called *uwet* or *ulam wedus tulen* (Javanese) which means real goat meat as it also contains slices of goat meat.

It was commercialized in 1955 as *Nasi Uwet* H. Zarkasi, located on Sulawesi Street Number 25, Kergon, West Pekalongan, Pekalongan, Central Java. It opens daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., except Thursday afternoon and Friday morning to honour Thursday night as the Islamic traditional holy night and Friday as the Islamic holy day where *Jumatan* (Islamic praying for men) takes place around 12 a.m. It closes during Ramadhan and opens at *Syawalan* (the Javanese traditional celebration of *Syawal* month that takes place seven days after *Eid al Fitr* or the Islamic greatest celebration).

This food stall also serves other Pekalongan traditional side dishes [8] such as *megono*, *garang asem*, *japitan*, beef *rendang*, chicken *opor*, boiled chicken intestine *sate* dipped in *opor* sauce, goat and chicken *sate*, grilled and fried chicken, and traditional seasoned beef brain, tongue, knuckle, and muscle. This food stall belongs to legendary traditional culinary of as it provides the city's old menus that are enjoyed by local, regional, and international tourists who fond of the city's traditional cuisine for almost 70 years.

During the holiday season, the food stall is run by five sons -and their wives- of the ten sons of the late H. Zarkasi and his late wife Hj. Asidah can be served up to 200 pieces of *uwet* or 6kg goat offal. *Uwet* is made after the goat offal is thoroughly cleaned to remove dirt and smell using their secret recipe. Next, thin slices of goat lungs, tripe, and meat are tightly bonded with goat intestine. It is then boiled with grinded garlic, onion, and candlenut; and added with salt, sugar, pepper, and black soy ketchup to create a sweet but light soup with *uwet*. *Uwet* is commonly served with the soup as sauce and small-chopped tomatoes or *rawit setan* (Javanese small red chillies with a very hot taste). The local people and visitors from other cities including a famous comedian from the Indonesian capital city and the former minister of information visited this food stall in the past [9]. Nowadays, it is visited by traditional food lovers, food bloggers or vloggers, and foreigners who visit the city for its *batik* (Javanese traditional cloth) or cultural study and research.

## 4.2 Discussion

As a cultural city with three ethnicities, Javanese, Chinese, and Arabic, who inhabit the city in harmony for such a long time; Pekalongan becomes a city of culture and tradition where cultural and traditional celebrations are continuously held. It is performed not only to meet the cultural and spiritual needs of each ethnicity but also to add to the local government income from the tourism sector since it serves as a tourism attraction that is annually planned by the city.

For the Arabic ethnic, their cultural, traditional, and spiritual celebrations cannot be done without the presence of Arabian food made of goat meat like what their ancestor served for the celebration in their origin countries besides Arabian food made of camel meat. As there is no camel in Java and goat is common livestock in Java whose meat is consumed by Javanese, the Arabic ethnic developed local goat farming to provide affordable goat meat and milk for their daily need and special occasions related to cultural, traditional, and spiritual celebrations.

The goat meat is specially cooked with a specific recipe using Arabian herbs and seasoning to make Arabian food that is especially served to celebrate weddings, anniversaries, *aqiqah*, *khitan*, or Islamic celebrations like Eid al Fitr and Eid al Adha as well as to commemorate someone's death. When goat meat is mainly used as premium raw material, the goat offal becomes the unused or unwanted raw material that is underrated as it is considered cheap, dirty, smelly, and contains higher cholesterol levels than goat meat.

The use of goat offal as a good food source that can be processed into a high-value side dish reflects the Javanese local wisdom of utilising what is left from other ethnic uses of a particular food source. For Javanese *moslem*, including Pekalongan City's Javanese *moslem*, the use of goat meat and goat offal reflects their (1) religious system and religious ceremony since the side dish made of it is served in *berkat* (Javanese Islamic traditional serving) that is blessed by *ustad*, *kyai*, or *ulama* (Javanese Islamic spiritual leader) and distributed to everybody who follow the religious ceremony, (2) organization system and society system since it is previously utilized as cultural, traditional, and spiritual serving by Arabic ethnic that can be enjoyed by commoners as culinary product nowadays, (3) knowledge system since it shows how the local people know how to utilize wasted raw material to solve environmental problem and preserve local natural resource that is underrated as high value side dish, (4) language since it uses local language for naming the culinary product, (5) art since the way it is cooked reflects the art of traditional cooking to process particular raw material into special side dish, (6) livelihood system since it adds the local people income who were involved in the culinary business and tourism industry, as well as (7) technology and tools system since it reflects the local people's particular way of handling raw material with specific feature that is difficult to be handled and processing it into a delicious side dish that is enjoyed by consumers for almost 70 years.

The elements of culture that are reflected in the use of goat meat and goat offal as *uwet* shows Pekalongan City residents, particularly Javanese Islamic local people, local wisdom of preserving their environment and maintaining their culture by learning from their ancestors the way to make use of vainly wasted raw material with difficult feature to be handled and to utilise the remaining of the primary food source to bear enjoyable traditional cuisine. It also reflects their way of thinking and living by creatively developing traditional cuisine into commercial products in the tourism industry that improve their wealth.

The food stall belongs to small home industry employing families as workers. To keep traditional cuisine surviving in the modern era, it must be promoted through social media using Javanese with Pekalongan Dialect, Indonesian, and English to preserve the local language and to promote the traditional cuisine locally, nationally, and internationally. It must be supported by the society and the local government by giving soft loans to develop the business, to improve the local people's economy, to get additional income for the local government, and to support the central government program of sustainable development goals.

## 5 Conclusion

From the discussion of the research object, the researcher found out that Pekalongan City's local people's local wisdom of utilising wasted raw material as a food source to save their environment, processing it into traditional cuisine to keep their culture and tradition, and selling it as a culinary product to improve their economy reflect their way of thinking and way of life as Javanese that is learned from their ancestors. The way H. Zarkasi make use of goat offal and differently processes it from others into high-quality delicious side dishes with high economic value that are continuously practised by his descendants shows his local wisdom as Javanese as well as he and his family's effort of saving their city's environment, culture, and economy through culinary business.

The research result is similar to Savitri's [10] and Atrinawati's research [11,12] result, that is, culture maintenance is beneficial for society. Thus, efforts in business related to culture maintenance must be supported by society through community service from scholars, financial support from the local government, and promotion from the local people who are proud of their culture to keep its benefits.

## References

1. Tylor, E.B. *Primitive Culture. Research into Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom.* John Murray, London, (1891)
2. Koentjaraningrat. *Pengantar Ilmu Antropologi.* Rineka Cipta, Jakarta (2000)
3. Schwartz, T. In Spencer-Oatey, H. "What is culture? A Compilation of Quotations". University of Warwick, UK (2012)

4. Holmes, J. *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Longman, New York (1992)
5. Sugiyono. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dan R&D*. CV Alfabeta, Bandung (2010)
6. Bronner, Ed.. *The Meaning of Folklore: The Analytical Essays of Alan Dundes*. Logan. Utah State University Press, Utah (2007)
7. Sudaryanto. *Metode dan Aneka Teknik Analisis Bahasa. (Pengantar Penelitian Wacana Kebudayaan secara Linguistik)*. Duta Wacana, Yogyakarta (1993)
8. Atrinawati. "Rebranding "Nasi Uwet" as Pekalongan City Traditional Cuisine for Culinary Tourism as part of Javanese Culture Maintenance", In the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Culture and Sustainable Development (ICOCAS) Proceedings, FIB, UNDIP, Semarang, (2024)
9. Kasirin, U. "Nasi Uwet Haji Zarkasi Pekalongan, Daging Kambing Asli Sejak 1959". <https://mojok.co/liputan/kuliner/nasi-uwet-haji-zarkasi-pekalongan-dari-daging-kambing-asli-sejak-1959/>, last accessed 2024/11/1
10. Savitri, A.I. "Introducing New Traditional Cuisine for Maintaining Culture and Promoting Tourism in Tegal Regency". *Culturalistics: Journal of Cultural, Literary, and Linguistic Studies*. 3(2), 7-12, (2019)
11. Atrinawati. "Javanese Culture Maintenance by Utilizing Natural Resources for Traditional Cuisine to Promote Tegal City Culinary Tourism". In The 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Energy, Environment, Epidemiology, and Information System (ICENIS) Proceedings, FIB, UNDIP, Semarang (2021)
12. Atrinawati. "Environment Preservation, Culture Maintenance, and Economy Improvement by Creatively Developing Traditional Cuisine into Modern Culinary Tourism Industry in Tegal". In The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Culture and Sustainable Development (ICOCAS) Proceedings, FIB, UNDIP, Semarang, (2023)