

WEAVING WORLDS TOGETHER: WASTRA NUSANTARA'S ROLE IN CROSS-CULTURAL CREATIVE INITIATIVES"

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Submitted: 03-03-2025, Revised: 10-07-2025, Accepted: 30-07-2025

ABSTRACT

International university collaborations offer significant avenues for both academic advancement and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Recognizing this potential, Tarumanagara University (Untar), Indonesia and Kun Shan University (KSU), Taiwan, established a partnership aimed at enriching the cultural perspective of their respective communities. This study details a specific initiative designed to strengthen the relationship between the two institutions and promote Indonesian culture. The primary goals were to introduce the richness of Wastra Nusantara (Indonesian traditional textiles) to KSU students and to cultivate positive intercultural interactions through hands-on activities. The community engagement activity, titled "Wastra Nusantara in Creativity", was conducted directly on the Kun Shan University campus by Untar team, involving student participants from KSU. The methodology included a direct presentation of insights into Wastra Nusantara, supported by the study of various textile examples. Participants were then guided through creative application exercises using Kalimantan woven fabrics, allowing them to practical engagements with the cultural artifacts. The initiative yielded highly positive outcomes. KSU students demonstrated considerable enthusiasm for learning about Wastra Nusantara and actively participated in the creative application sessions. This engagement successfully facilitated cultural exchange, strengthened the inter-university relationship, and effectively promoted Indonesian cultural heritage through the tangible medium of Wastra Nusantara.

Keywords: Creative Industry; Cross-Cultural Collaboration; National Identity; Wastra Nusantara.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a rich cultural heritage in various forms, one of which is Wastra Nusantara. Wastra is not just a cloth used in the past, it also represents the identity, history and philosophy of its people. Each motif on wastra such as batik, jumputan, kerrawang, weaving and ikat weaving, contains a deep meaning and tells the story of its origin. However, with the rapid flow of globalization and modernization, the younger generation's interest in Wastra Nusantara tends to decline, and preservation and promotion efforts at the international level still need to be improved. One of the international activities aimed at preserving and promoting wastra is Wastra Wonderland in Merusaka Nusa Dua, Badung, Bali (Yusuf, 2024). Untar as a university sees international cooperation as an opportunity to preserve and promote Indonesian culture.

The Decorative Design course in the Untar Interior Design Study Program is a tangible manifestation of higher education's concern and contribution in preserving and exploring the nation's cultural potential to be applied to various fields in the current era. In this course, students create design works by considering aspects of local history and culture with modern adaptations through new functions. This course is opened every semester, even semester as a compulsory course for Interior Design Study Program students, and odd semester for students from external study programs at Untar.



Figure 1. Tuku Coffee Packaging Design by Untar Management Students (Kevin Sie and Nicholas Triputra) in Course of Decorative Design (Cross Study Program) Odd Semester Academic Year 2024/2025.



Figure 2. User Interface Design on the MINANGVERSE Website by FTI Untar Students (Hansen Pratama, Sabrina Phalosa, Hans Santoso, Angeline Shevenia) in Course of Design (Cross Study Program) Odd Semester Academic Year 2024/2025.

Kun Shan University (KSU), as a higher education institution in Taiwan, has study programs relevant to design and art. The College of Creative Media, KSU consists of 5 departments, including 5 undergraduate programs and 3 post-graduate programs (An Introduction of College of Creative Media, n.d.). For example, the Department of Spatial Design, which was established in 1998, is a vocational program with 4 years of education (Introduction of Spatial Design Department, n.d.), and despite this, KSU students have limited understanding and direct experience of the diversity of Wastra Nusantara. The lack of information about Indonesia's traditional textile arts is an obstacle in enriching their insight into global culture and Indonesian handicrafts as a Southeast Asian country. They also have a need to broaden their creative perspectives through comparative studies with textile arts from other countries, so as to produce more innovative and globally competitive works.



Figure 3. Kun Shan University Campus (Source: <https://eng-web.ksu.edu.tw/DASACLS/page/40328>).

The spirit of preservation and promotion of Wastra Nusantara as a national identity is reflected in the organization of Wastra Nusantara Fashion (WNF) activities held at Sriwedari Park Solo (Fatimah, 2024). This activity was attended by young people who were enthusiastic in exploring the potential of Wastra Nusantara for creativity applied in the field of fashion.

Research on Wastra Nusantara shows an awareness of the importance of studying Wastra Nusantara and its potential as one of Indonesia's cultural identities. One of them is research on modified kebaya produced with the concept of zero waste (Purbasari, Sasmoko, Rombe, & Manalu,

2020). This research aimed to determine the feasibility of modern kebaya products with the zero waste pattern technique based on Nusantara wastra. The results showed a percentage of 89% with a very feasible category.

Another research focuses on Wastra Nusantara as an effort to maintain local wisdom (Oktafiah, Budiarti, & Rachmawati, 2023). From this research, it is known that the shibori technique has the potential to adapt methods in making. Training activities are considered effective to improve knowledge, skills and creativity of the products produced.

The great potential of Wastra Nusantara has also been presented at an international conference (Purbasari, Sasmoko, Rombe, & Manalu, 2020). It was mentioned that by applying visual communication design and the eight golden principles on web displays and device-based applications, the Nusantara Traditional Wastra Digital Repository was designed with the concept of cultural values by displaying visuals of Nusantara wastra. One of the NTWDR's web and mobile application features contains a gallery of various Nusantara Wastra motifs complete with information in the form of history, philosophical values, manufacturing materials, and the manufacturing process.

2. METHOD

The outline of the method of implementing the International community engagement "Wastra Nusantara in Creativity" can be seen in the following flowchart:

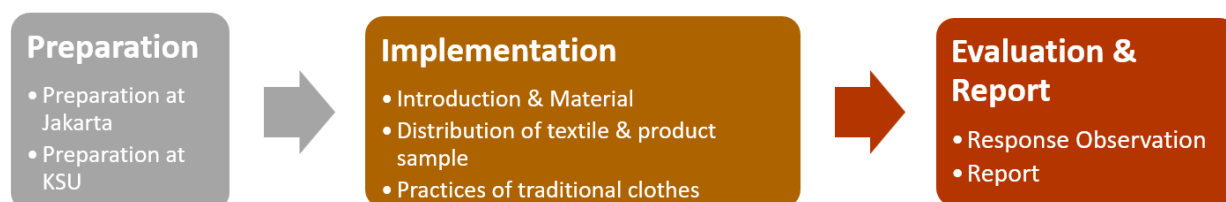


Figure 4. Flowchart of PKM Internasional "Wastra Nusantara in Creativity" (Source: Personal Documentation).

The method of implementing the International community engagement "Wastra Nusantara in Creativity" is carried out in several stages:

1. Preparatory Stage:

Preparatory Stage in Jakarta:

- a. Briefing conducted by Research and Community Engagement Office (LPPM) of Untar
LPPM provides direction to all International PKM teams, provides basic information about KSU partners and International PKM preparation plans.
- b. Preparation of presentation materials
Presentation materials are prepared by internal brainstorming of the lecturer team, to get comprehensive material but not too complicated considering the purpose of the presentation is for the introduction and promotion of culture. Another thing that was taken into consideration in the preparation of the material was the overall time limit, which was from 09.00 to 12.00 local time. The Wastra Nusantara team is included in the Architecture and Design group, which consists of 4 (four)

activities, including a Guest Lecturing entitled "Joglo House: Beyond Tradition". So the time allocation for each activity title is 47 minutes.



Figure 5. Compilation of PKM Materials (Source: Personal Documentation).

- c. Purchase of some samples of traditional fabrics
The team brought several examples of traditional fabrics to show at the community engagement International activity, so that participants could touch and observe the texture of the fabric.
- d. Purchase of several samples of products using traditional fabrics.

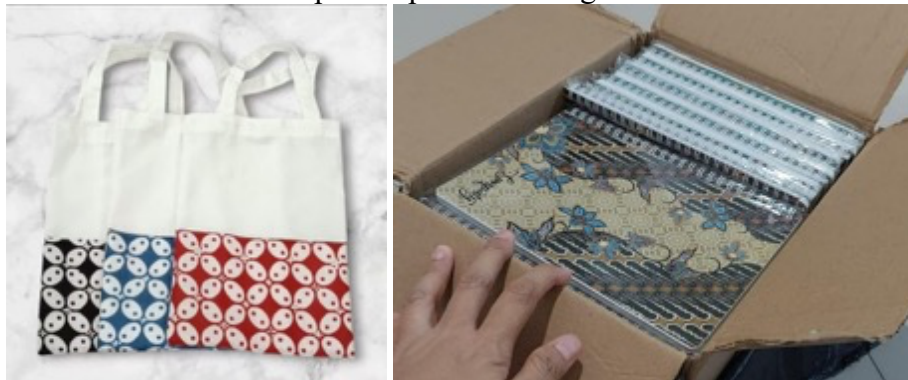


Figure 6. Purchase Product Sample (Source: Personal Documentation).

Community engagement International participants received a goodie bag featuring a kawung batik patterned fabric accent. The bag's design combines plain fabric with the batik pattern, giving it a more modern look. The batik bag include several products inspired by the archipelago's wastra such as notebooks with batik-patterned covers, batik-patterned pens, and headbands made from Kalimantan weaving.

Preparation Stage at KSU:

- a. Review of classrooms in KSU as a place of activity
- b. Check the presentation of the material on the projector

2. Implementation Stage:

a. Introduction and material explanation



Figure 7. Explanation of Material and Explanation of PKM Participants' Activities.

Although the number of participants is not optimal, the activities must begin immediately considering the limited duration of the activity. The activity began with Guest Lecturing, followed by International community engagement activities "Wastra Nusantara in Creativity".

b. Distribution of product samples and samples of traditional fabrics

After the presentation of material about wastra Nusantara, the team distributed product samples and samples of traditional fabrics which were included in 1 (one) goodie bag package.

c. Practice of applying traditional fabrics

The activity that initially included the practice of making two-dimensional works and the practice of applying Kalimantan's typical woven headband, was then focused on the second activity. Examples of two-dimensional works were still included in the presentation files, to broaden participants' horizons on simple examples of applying traditional fabrics in creative activities.

3. Evaluation Stage:

a. Observing the response of community engagement participants

The team experienced communication difficulties because KSU students did not use English actively, while none of the Wastra Nusantara lecturer team members mastered Taiwanese. However, participants can still understand in general so that they can still apply creative activities. Here are some examples of 2-dimensional creative works utilizing traditional fabrics:



Figure 8. Two Dimensional Creative Work: Single Sofa.

In Image 9, seen the design pattern of a single sofa which is then sliced on several edges of the field so that it can be filled with traditional fabrics. This activity is experimental so that students can try several combinations of motifs and colors of traditional fabrics on the sofa.

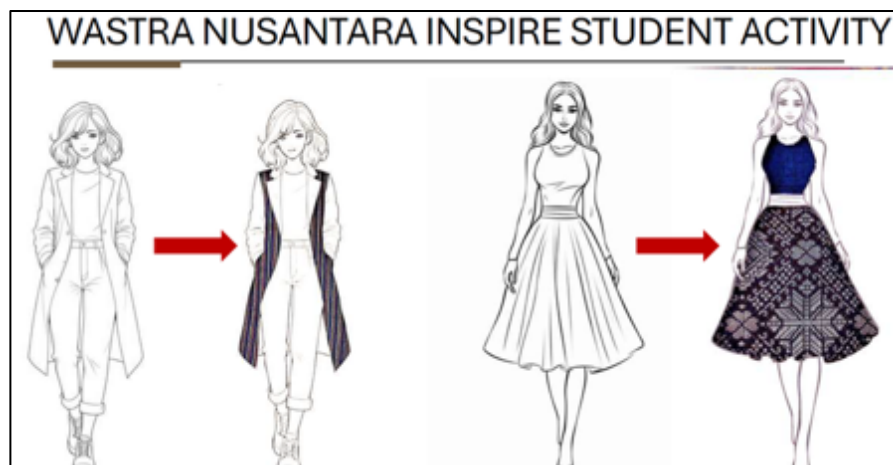


Figure 9. Creative Work 2 (two) Dimensions: Fashion.

Likewise in Image 12 above, is an example of a fashion pattern that is also sliced in several parts so that it can be filled with traditional fabric colors and motifs.

b. Preparing an implementation report

The report on the implementation of the International community engagement “Wastra Nusantara in Creativity” is prepared based on the provisions that have been submitted by LPPM. The report is submitted as a form of team accountability to the assignor.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The partner of the International community engagement activity “Wastra Nusantara in Creativity” is Kun Shan University (KSU), a leading higher education institution in Tainan, Taiwan. KSU was chosen because it has a strong relevance to the fields of art, design, and culture, with the existence of the College of Creative Media which consists of 5 Undergraduate Programs (Department of Visual Communication Design, Department of Motion Pictures and Video, Department of Spatial Design, Department of Public Relations and Advertising, and Department of Information and Communication) and 3 Postgraduate Programs (Graduate School of Visual Communication Design, Graduate School of Media Arts, and Graduate School of Environment Design). KSU has adequate campus infrastructure, including representative classrooms and creativity support facilities, in accordance with the needs of the implementation of activities. KSU also shows high enthusiasm to enrich the academic and cultural horizons of its students through international collaboration.

The participants of this community engagement activity were KSU students, consisting of 12 students. The characteristics of the participants showed interest and creative potential, despite communication limitations due to language barriers. None of the participants had any knowledge or insight into Wastra Nusantara prior to this activity. They showed great curiosity and openness to new cultures, which were important indicators of the activity's success.

The implementation of the International community engagement activity “Wastra Nusantara in Creativity” was designed in two main interrelated sessions, namely the presentation of Wastra Nusantara material and the participants' creative activities using traditional fabrics.

a. Presentation of Wastra Nusantara Material

This session provided important basic knowledge for the participants. The material was presented comprehensively, covering the following aspects:

- History and development of Wastra Nusantara.

This section discusses the general definition of Wastra Nusantara, including the origin of the term Wastra Nusantara.



Figure 10. General Discussion on Wastra Nusantara (Source: Personal Documentation).

- Type of Wastra Nusantara

This section discusses the uniqueness of each type of Indonesian textiles, namely Batik, Jumputan, Kerawang, Tenun, and Tenun Ikat. Each type is discussed in terms of its uniqueness and illustrations that show the visual characteristics of the textile in question.



Figure 11. Detail Discussion of Each Type of Textile (Source: Personal Documentation).

- Development of the creative industry with Indonesian textiles

This section discusses several examples of the application of Indonesian textiles in various fields.



Figure 12. Examples of the Application of Indonesian Textiles in Interior Design (Source: Personal Documentation)

The presentation method is interactive, utilizing multimedia (videos, images, and samples of authentic textile fabrics). Open discussions and question-and-answer sessions are also facilitated to ensure participants' understanding. Analysis indicates that this presentation session can capture participants' attention and provide a strong foundation of knowledge before entering the practical session.

b. Participants' Creative Activities

This session is the core of the community engagement activity, where participants are invited to directly interact with the textile and express their creative ideas. This activity is designed for:

- Material Exploration
- Conceptualization of Work
- Creative Implementation
- Completion and Presentation

Analysis of this session revealed extraordinary enthusiasm from the participants. They not only learned new techniques but also developed their creative thinking and problem-solving skills. The resulting works were highly diverse, showcasing each participant's unique interpretation of Nusantara textiles. This process effectively bridges theoretical understanding with practical experience, reinforcing their appreciation of textiles as an artistic expression.

The International community engagement activity “Wastra Nusantara in Creativity” successfully achieved several significant outcomes that demonstrate the positive impact of this program, such as international journal article, copyright of activity poster and prototype. These outcomes demonstrate that community engagement activities not only provide direct benefits to partners and participants but also contribute to the advancement of knowledge, the protection of intellectual property, and the promotion of Indonesian culture on a global scale.

4. CONCLUSION

The International Community Engagement (PKM) activity entitled “Wastra Nusantara in Creativity” initiative stands as a testament to the positive impact of academic collaboration between Tarumanagara University (Indonesia) and Kun Shan University (Taiwan). This activity not only enriched the academic development of both institutions but also significantly contributed to cross-cultural understanding.

The success of this particular PKM was largely due to the thoughtful selection of its theme: Wastra Nusantara. This rich and diverse aspect of Indonesian culture proved highly engaging for KSU student participants, sparking their curiosity and providing a vibrant platform for learning about Indonesia’s national identity. The enthusiastic response underscores the immense potential for future international activities that explore the vast array of Indonesian cultural diversity, thereby introducing the nation’s heritage to a global audience.

Moving forward, the collaborative efforts between Untar and KSU can be further enhanced. By strategically mapping out relevant topics and diversifying the types of activities, future international PKM initiatives can continue to strengthen the bond between the two universities, foster academic exchange, and promote the unique cultural tapestry of Indonesia on the world stage.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have no relevant competing interests to disclose concerning the content of this article.

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