Reproduction of gender-based symbolic violence in the traditional craft industry: A study of Ikat Weaving in Kediri

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Article information	Abstract
        	The reproduction of gender-based symbolic violence in the Kediri ikat weaving industry occurs through seniority hierarchies, cultural norms, and gendered division of labor, which normalize obedience, limit women's creative autonomy, and restrict their access to training, innovation, and decision-making. This study aims to analyze how interactions among female actors in the Kediri ikat weaving industry reproduce gender-based symbolic violence through intergenerational mechanisms, skill transmission, cultural norms, and pedagogical practices that reinforce power hierarchies. This study uses a qualitative-critical approach with an intrinsic case study design in three weaving houses in Kediri. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation, analyzed thematically to explore the reproduction of gender-based symbolic violence through habitus, doxa, and symbolic capital. This study shows that symbolic violence in the Kediri ikat weaving industry is reproduced through relational mechanisms, social surveillance, and the internalization of cultural norms. Habitus, doxa, and intergenerational authority reinforce seniority while limiting the creativity and autonomy of junior artisans. Javanese social norms and economic vulnerability moderate these processes, resulting in the internalization of domination, hierarchical stability, and a cycle of intergenerational power reproduction. The findings highlight the need for community-based interventions, such as participatory training, cross-generational mentoring, and transparent wage schemes, to challenge symbolic domination while preserving artisans' creativity, autonomy, and the sustainability of ikat weaving traditions.

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INTRODUCTION

The reproduction of gender-based symbolic violence constitutes a structural social problem that operates latently through systems of meaning, language, and social practices legitimized as dominant norms (Bourdieu, 1990; Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). In patriarchal societies, symbolic violence does not manifest through physical coercion but rather through processes of normalization that render unequal power relations natural, legitimate, and unproblematic (Thapar-Bjorkert et al., 2016). This mechanism enables gender inequality to persist because it is not recognized as a form of violence (misrecognition). In Indonesia, the persistently high number of reported cases of violence against women documented by National Commission on Violence Against Women (2024) indicates that structural gender inequality remains a fundamental basis for the reproduction of gender-based violence and continues to hinder efforts toward gender justice transformation (Morgenroth & Ryan, 2018).

Theoretically, Bourdieu (1990) conceptualizes symbolic violence as a form of domination that operates through the internalization of values and norms that benefit dominant groups and are voluntarily accepted by those who are dominated. Within gender relations, this mechanism is evident in the internalization of patriarchal values that position women in subordinate roles in both domestic and public spheres (Vogel et al., 2024). Numerous studies in Asia highlight the central role of women in traditional textile industries, particularly weaving, where they function simultaneously as economic actors and custodians of cultural heritage and symbolic identity (Dias et al., 2020; Krisnadi, 2024). Nevertheless, existing research also reveals that women weavers continue to face limited access to capital, markets, and decision-making processes, alongside the persistent undervaluation of their labor and creative contributions (Semuel et al., 2022; Vogeley & Oetojo, 2025). At the global level, the textile and garment sectors are likewise characterized by high levels of vulnerability among women to various forms of gender-based violence in the workplace (Eger, 2021; Li, 2023).

Despite the growing body of literature on gender and the textile industry, most studies remain focused on male structural domination over women or on physical and institutional forms of violence. Research that examines the internal mechanisms through which symbolic violence is reproduced within women's communities remains relatively limited. In particular, horizontal and intergenerational power relations among women themselves are rarely analyzed, especially in relation to the transmission of skills, cultural authority, and naturalized aesthetic standards (Kabeer, 2010; Juran & Trivedi, 2015). In the context of the traditional ikat weaving industry in Kediri specifically Bandar Kidul as one of its primary production centers gendered divisions of labor, cultural hierarchies, and symbolic control over aesthetic standards create conditions for the operation of non-physical symbolic violence that is widely accepted as a legitimate social order (Liang, 2024). This situation demonstrates that matrilineal systems of traditional inheritance do not necessarily imply egalitarian relations but may instead continue to reproduce symbolic domination.

Based on this research gap, the present study aims to analyze how internal interactions among women weavers within the traditional ikat weaving industry in Kediri contribute to the reproduction of gender-based symbolic violence. Specifically, the study examines intergenerational mechanisms of skill transmission, cultural norms, and pedagogical practices that shape hierarchical and naturalized power relations within weaving communities. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of symbolic violence studies by extending Bourdieu's framework to the analysis of horizontal and intergenerational domination among women within local cultural contexts. Practically, the findings are expected to encourage critical reflection on traditional inheritance practices in order to promote more just, inclusive, and culturally sustainable modes of transmission.

This study is grounded in the assumption that gender-based symbolic violence within the traditional ikat weaving industry does not originate solely from external patriarchal structures, but is also internally reproduced through cultural mechanisms in which women function simultaneously as agents and subjects of symbolic domination. Accordingly, the research question guiding this study is: How do internal interactions among women weavers reproduce gender-based symbolic violence in the traditional ikat weaving industry in Kediri, and how do horizontal and intergenerational power relations operate within processes of skill transmission and cultural authority?

METHOD

Design and Approach

This study uses a qualitative-critical approach with an intrinsic case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of how symbolic violence is reproduced in the ikat weaving community in Bandar Kidul, Kediri. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for the exploration of meanings, symbolic practices, and subjective experiences that cannot be reduced to quantitative indicators, while the critical perspective is used to reveal the hidden power relations embedded in the everyday social practices of women (Stake, 1995; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). The research was conducted in three weaving studios, Medali Mas I, Medali Mas II, and Kodok Ngorek, which were selected purposively because they represent variations in the generations of weavers, symbolic authority structures, and the sustainability of the weaving tradition in Kampung Tenun Bandar, a historical center where weaving skills are passed down matrilineally and women are the main actors in production.

Participants and Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. Participants included senior weavers (aged >45 years with >20 years of experience), junior weavers (aged <35 years with <5 years of experience), community facilitators, and local cultural figures. Participants were selected using purposive sampling followed by the principle of data saturation to ensure depth and diversity of information (Guest et al., 2006). Participant observation focused on production routines, training interactions, aesthetic evaluation processes, and subtle gestures that reflect symbolic authority and compliance mechanisms (Cabral et al., 2024). The documentation study included local historical archives, visual recordings of the weaving process, and cultural narratives related to motifs and skill transmission.

Research Stages

This research was conducted through several main stages that were interrelated. The pre-field stage began with social mapping of the weaving community, tracing local historical archives, and obtaining ethical permits as a basis for building contextual understanding and initial relationships with participants (Geekiyanage et al., 2021). The next stage was field data collection, which was conducted in parallel through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation to capture the dynamics of social practices holistically (Friedemann et al., 2011). Along with this process, preliminary analysis and reflection are carried out simultaneously to identify initial patterns, tensions in meaning, and indications of power relations that emerge from the data. The final stage involves in-depth analysis and validation of findings through theme reinforcement, theoretical interpretation, and verification of results to ensure analytical consistency and reliability of research findings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the thematic analysis procedure proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), starting from verbatim transcription, open coding, to the development of main themes such as symbolic authority, norms of compliance, resistance to innovation, and hidden criticism. The analysis process was iterative and reflective, in which the researcher repeatedly linked empirical data with the theoretical framework. The themes that emerged were then interpreted using Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, symbolic capital, and doxa, combined with a cultural feminist perspective to examine how symbolic domination is reproduced and negotiated in everyday gender relations (Schofield, 2021; Uekusa et al., 2024).

Validity and Ethics

To ensure the reliability of the findings, this study applied methodological triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and audit trails that documented all analytical and methodological decisions (Ahmed, 2024; Schlunegger et al., 2024). Ethically, all participants provided informed consent, their identities were disguised, and sensitive narratives were treated with care to avoid reproducing symbolic inequalities in the research process (Balkin et al., 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Historical trajectory of the ikat weaving industry in Kediri

Kediri's ikat weaving industry has evolved through shifting economic, technological, and cultural conditions. Archival records from the Dutch East Indies period document the early industrialization of weaving led by Chinese community leaders and foreign-trained artisans. Over time, the weaving center in Bandar Kidul transformed into a predominantly women-driven craft industry, marked by manual production methods and fluctuating market demand. As the industry experienced significant decline following the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the number of active weavers dropped sharply, shaping the current landscape of small-scale weaving houses dominated by family-based or community-rooted enterprises. To provide contextual grounding for the empirical findings, this study presents a chronological overview of Kediri's weaving industry based on historical archives. The timeline below summarizes significant milestones influencing the industry's current structure.

Table 1

*Timeline of the Development of Kediri's Ikat Weaving Industry*

Period	Key Events	Implications
1925–1938 (Dutch East Indies)	Establishment of *Tenoen 1925*; import of 150 looms from British India; recruitment of skilled Indian weavers; emergence of four major weaving factories	Introduction of industrial-scale weaving and transfer of weaving expertise to local residents
Post-Independence (1950s–1970s)	Concentration of production in Bandar Kidul; dominance of palikat sarong weaving	Strengthening of matrilineal weaving traditions and household-based production
1980s–1990s	Competition with machine-made sarongs; decline in handwoven production	Shift toward Goyor Kembang motifs to maintain market interest
1997 Economic Crisis	Soaring raw material costs; many weavers leave the industry	Reduction in artisan numbers and discontinuation of several weaving houses
Early 2000s	Promotion of ikat for everyday fashion; municipal revitalization initiatives	Increased public awareness and symbolic recognition of local heritage
2014–Present	Partial revival of Goyor sarong production; survival of only a few weaving houses	Consolidation of weaving activities within small family-based enterprises

Worker composition and organisational structure across three weaving houses

The study examined three weaving houses Medali Mas I, Medali Mas II, and Kodok Ngorek located along Kyai Agus Salim Street. Although independently managed, they share similar structural characteristics. Field observations across Medali Mas I, Medali Mas II, and Kodok Ngorek reveal a multigenerational workforce consisting of senior weavers, junior weavers, loom operators, thread preparers, dyers, and sales staff. While both men and women are present, women constitute the majority of producers and are responsible for core weaving activities. Senior weavers, usually older than 45 with over 20 years of experience, hold informal leadership roles that influence work distribution and production standards. Junior workers often entering the craft after high school occupy subordinate positions and perform simpler tasks. Owners, most of whom are women, oversee production decisions, quality control, motif selection, and coordination with distributors or tourists.

Figure 1
Workforce Compotition in Three Weaving Houses
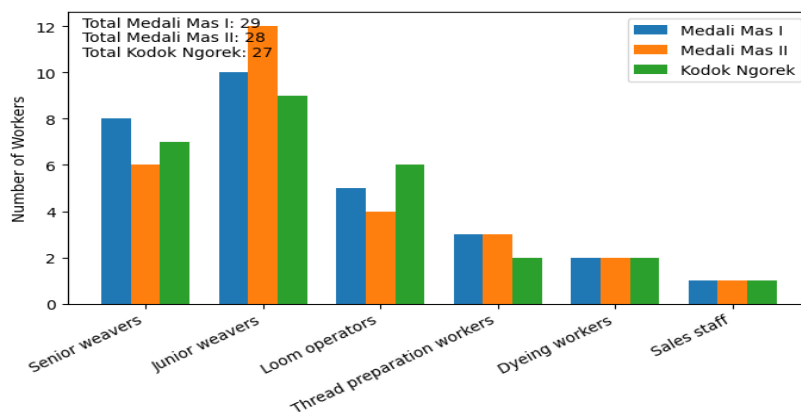
Across all weaving houses, women constitute the core of daily production. Senior weavers function as trusted authorities, shaping quality control and motif accuracy. Junior weavers often receive directive-based training and have limited opportunities to work on complex patterns. The informal hierarchical structure rooted in tenure and cultural expectations establishes implicit authority relations that shape daily interactions.

Working hours, targets, and daily routines

Workdays typically begin around 08:00 AM and conclude between 04:00–05:00 PM, with short, flexible breaks. Production intensity increases during peak periods such as Eid seasons, exhibitions, and bulk orders. Production targets are delivered verbally and vary depending on skill level: senior weavers are expected to complete complex motifs more quickly, while junior workers handle repetitive or low-complexity patterns. Because wages follow a piece-rate system, failing to meet daily targets directly affects income, causing many workers to maintain continuous pace throughout the day with minimal rest.

Wage system and income distribution

The three weaving houses apply a piece-rate payment model without written contracts. Complex motifs such as *ceplok*, *kawung*, and traditional Kediri geometric patterns yield higher earnings, whereas simple motifs offer lower pay. Senior weavers earn substantially more due to their access to complex tasks and superior speed. Junior workers often need months to reach stable income levels, and informal agreements based on long-standing trust shape wage negotiations. Payments are issued weekly or biweekly, reflecting long-term practices inherited across generations.

Gendered division of labor

Gender norms significantly shape task distribution. Women predominantly weave, prepare warp and weft threads, dye smaller batches, and conduct finishing processes. Men usually handle physically demanding tasks such as adjusting loom frames, lifting dyeing equipment, or preparing large yarn bundles. Many women combine weaving with domestic responsibilities, which affects the continuity of their working hours. "We work all day on weaving, then go home to cook and care for children. But it is our responsibility, and everyone expects it," Darman, a male weaver stated. Despite this dual burden, they remain the primary labor force due to community expectations, patience required for alignment techniques, and generational familiarity with weaving.

Age-based differentiation and skill hierarchies

Age correlates strongly with authority and skill. Senior weavers carry symbolic and technical authority, interpret complex motifs, and correct mistakes in the work of juniors. Younger workers often perform preparatory tasks or simple motif production. Although many junior weavers express interest in mastering advanced patterns, opportunities for skill upgrading remain limited due to supervisors' preference for assigning high-value tasks to trusted senior workers. Daily interactions reinforce hierarchy through role modeling, correction practices, and subtle normative expectations.

Figure 2
Skill Levels, Motif Assignment, and Opportunities for Advancement
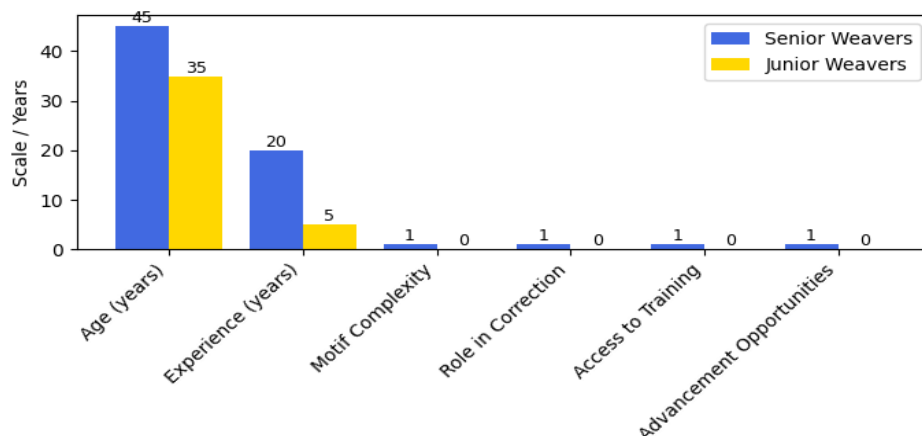
Authority and decision-making practices

Authority is centralized in the owners, who control production scheduling, quality standards, motif assignments, and workplace norms. Supervisors serve as intermediaries, monitoring pace, correcting weaving errors, and ensuring adherence to deadlines. Forms of verbal correction, returning flawed cloths for revision, and checking loom speed are perceived by workers as routine disciplinary measures rather than punitive acts. Decision-making is top-down, and workers rarely negotiate due to loyalty, respect, and fear of income instability.

Cultural norms and compliance

Workplace dynamics are shaped by cultural expectations, including *sungkan*, *ewuh pakewuh*, and respect for elders. Many workers describe a sense of emotional attachment to weaving houses because of familial or community history. As a result, they often accept high workloads or physical discomfort without objection. Compliance is reinforced by gratitude to owners who have "given employment," further entrenching hierarchical relations. "We

respect our seniors and the house because it has been in our family for generations. Even if the work is hard, we feel proud to continue it," Ahmadi, a middle-aged weaver explained. These norms minimize open conflict and sustain a harmonious yet unequal work environment.

Access to training and capacity-building

Training occurs informally and relies on observation, imitation, and guidance from senior weavers. Participation in external training such as design innovation programs or government workshops is mediated by owners, who typically select senior weavers or supervisors to attend. Junior workers have limited access to skill development opportunities, which slows their upward mobility. Access to advanced design tools or creative consultations is similarly uneven across workers. "Sometimes the government organizes a design workshop. Only seniors attend. We watch them learn, hoping we will be allowed next time," Yuni, a junior weaver shared.

Work pressure and daily challenges

Workers across the three weaving houses experience strong pressure to maintain output speed and avoid mistakes. Motif misalignment or thread breakage requires time-consuming corrections that reduce earnings. Supervisors frequently monitor workers' pace and provide verbal reminders, which are internalized as normal components of craftsmanship discipline. "We respect the seniors because they know the motifs better. Sometimes they correct our mistakes gently, but it feels natural we expect it," Ida, a junior weaver explained.

Physical challenges such as back pain, eye strain, and finger fatigue are common, especially during high-order periods. These pressures, combined with piece-rate earnings, shape a work environment that demands high precision, endurance, and emotional self-regulation. "If I am slow, I earn less. I try to focus and finish on time. Sometimes it is tiring, but I have learned to accept it," Sulistyawati, a junior weaver noted.

Tabel 2
Thematic Patterns Identified Across Three Weaving Houses

Theme	Description
Symbolic Authority	Senior weavers serve as cultural gatekeepers whose corrections carry symbolic power
Compliance Norms	Workers internalize obedience due to emotional, cultural, and economic ties
Skill Stratification	Motif complexity determines income, authority, and training access
Invisible Pressures	Output-based wages and precision demands create constant internalized pressure

Figure 2 presents four central themes that characterize the everyday dynamics within the three weaving houses studied. The first theme, *Symbolic Authority*, shows how senior weavers act as cultural and technical gatekeepers whose judgments strongly influence junior weavers' sense of competence and legitimacy. The second theme, *Compliance Norms*, reflects how workers internalize obedience through cultural values such as *sungkan* and *ewuh pakewuh*, leading to limited negotiation or contestation of work instructions.

The third theme, *Skill Stratification*, highlights the hierarchical distribution of skills, where senior weavers maintain control over complex motifs and training access, while juniors remain confined to simpler tasks. Finally, *Invisible Pressures* describe the subtle, internalized demands such as speed, precision, and output-based wages that shape daily routines and reinforce symbolic discipline. Together, these themes illu9strate how symbolic violence

operates through normalized hierarchies, cultural expectations, and embodied work practices within the Kediri weaving community.

Discussion
Gender-based reproduction of symbolic violence in ikat weaving

The findings indicate that symbolic violence in the Kediri ikat weaving industry is reproduced through relational mechanisms that are indirect yet systematic. Corrective practices, verbal discipline, and unequal access to training are accepted by female weavers, particularly junior workers, as a natural part of the "craft culture" (McCarthy, 2024). Cultural norms such as habitus and doxa act as mediators bridging hierarchical structures between senior and junior weavers, as well as between men and women, with worker compliance (Pollmann, 2021). Consequently, domination is not exercised through direct coercion but is mediated by the internalization of obedience, respect for seniority, and the framing of control as an educational process (Dahwal & Fernando, 2024).

These findings reinforce the literature on symbolic violence and gendered labor, highlighting that domination in female-dominated industries is not only horizontal but also legitimized by cultural norms and intergenerational hierarchies (Bardall, 2019; Pickles, 2022). Consistent with previous studies, labor feminization does not automatically result in autonomy; rather, it is often accompanied by restrictions on creativity and decision-making access (Tong, 2018; Carrasco-Santos et al., 2024). The novelty of this study lies in the simultaneous mapping of relationships among gender hierarchy, seniority, and economic vulnerability, showing that the stability of tradition and the control of innovation operate in tandem to perpetuate inequality.

Within the socio-cultural context of Kediri, Javanese norms such as sungkan, ewuh pakewuh, and respect for elders reinforce the internalization of domination, while economic vulnerability through piece-rate wage systems moderates these relations by promoting self-discipline and minimal resistance (Hayes & Kleiner, 2001; Son Hing et al., 2023). Symbolic violence cannot be understood apart from the emotional attachment to tradition and economic necessity, which form the foundation of sustained domination. Therefore, interventions should target not only material aspects but also the transformation of symbolic structures through participatory training, equitable intergenerational relations, and more transparent work mechanisms.

Social surveillance and the reproduction of symbolic violence in craft work

The findings of this study synthesize that symbolic violence in women's craft work is primarily reproduced through subtle social surveillance integrated into daily work interactions. Such surveillance is not solely exercised by formal structures but emerges through interpersonal relations, particularly between senior and junior weavers (Zhong et al., 2023). Indirect criticism, gestures of disapproval, and corrective instructions framed as "education" function as mechanisms of symbolic discipline that limit the autonomy of junior weavers. In line with Contreras et al. (2025), domination in this context is maintained not through overt coercion but via implicit consent and internalization by subordinate actors, rendering power inequalities normalized and difficult to challenge.

From the perspective of inter-variable mechanisms, social surveillance serves as a key link between cultural norms and the reproduction of symbolic violence. Internalized aesthetic norms and values of obedience shape the symbolic control practices exercised by senior weavers, while peer enforcement reinforces its effectiveness as a mediating mechanism (Kamoche et al., 2014). This ongoing socialization process promotes the internalization of

domination among junior weavers, reflected in compliance, restricted critical expression, and self-censorship regarding innovation (Han et al., 2024). Consequently, the legitimacy of senior authority and hierarchical stability is generated through feedback between social surveillance and the internalization of subordination, rather than solely through formal hierarchy.

In relation to the literature, these findings align with studies of women's craft sectors in Northeast India, East Nusa Tenggara, and Sumba, which indicate that tradition-based knowledge transmission simultaneously preserves culture and reproduces gender hierarchies (Varriale, 2015; Dias et al., 2020; Widiastuti et al., 2024). The novelty of this study lies in emphasizing internal social surveillance rather than economic structures or formal authority as the primary mechanism of symbolic violence reproduction. In the context of Kediri weaving, this surveillance is intertwined with economic vulnerability, emotional attachment to tradition, and cultural norms emphasizing harmony and obedience. Therefore, practical implications require interventions targeting cultural and symbolic dimensions, such as participatory training, transparent wage schemes, and inclusive design spaces, to challenge symbolic domination without undermining the cultural vitality of the weaving community.

Reproducing symbolic violence via habitus, doxa, and intergenerational authority

The findings indicate that symbolic violence in the Kediri ikat weaving community is reproduced through cyclical processes rooted in tradition-based habitus, the normalization of doxa, and the reinforcement of intergenerational authority. Habitus inherited from weaving practices shapes value orientations regarding discipline, obedience, and specific aesthetic standards, which are accepted as "appropriate" work guidelines (Chantamool et al., 2024). These dispositions function as structures that are both structured and structuring, directing social action without direct coercion (Franco-Torres et al., 2021). Within this framework, symbolic violence does not manifest as overt repression but as everyday practices culturally legitimized and accepted by practitioners as inherent to the work tradition (Morgan & Björkert, 2006).

The study reveals a layered mechanism in which traditional habitus mediates the normalization of doxa unquestioned assumptions such as the belief that senior weavers hold absolute authority and that creativity must conform to tradition (Graziano, 2025). This doxa facilitates symbolic control practices, including aesthetic evaluation, corrections, and admonitions framed as "education" (Zhu et al., 2021). These practices are internalized by junior weavers, resulting in compliance, constrained critical expression, and self-censorship of innovation. The internalization process, in turn, reinforces the symbolic capital and authority of senior weavers as guardians of tradition, creating feedback that ensures the continuity of symbolic violence reproduction across generations (Bourdieu, 1990; Uwen & Ukam, 2024).

In relation to the literature and research context, these findings extend Bourdieu's scholarship and feminist studies on craft labor by emphasizing the role of intergenerational authority in female-dominated industries, particularly within the Javanese socio-cultural context, which values obedience, age hierarchy, and the continuity of tradition. Consistent with Mahmood (2005), weaving practices also serve as a space for articulating agency based on cultural attachment, yet in this context, such agency is intertwined with the perpetuation of unequal power relations. The specificity of the ikat weaving context demonstrates that the reproduction of symbolic violence is supported not only by economic structures but also by collective identity and emotional investment in cultural heritage (Samuel, 2013; Menéndez-Menéndez, 2014). Consequently, community-based interventions, such as participatory training, cross-generational design workshops, and standardized transparent wage schemes,

are essential for renegotiating symbolic hierarchies without undermining the sustainability of tradition.

These findings advance Bourdieu's literature on symbolic violence by highlighting the role of intergenerational authority and internal social surveillance in female-dominated industries, while also enriching feminist theory and labor culture studies through the emphasis on interactions among hierarchical structures, cultural norms, and economic vulnerability. Practical implications point to the need for community-based interventions targeting symbolic and cultural dimensions, including participatory training, cross-generational design workshops, and transparent wage schemes, to challenge symbolic domination while preserving cultural vitality. Senior-junior relations should emphasize equitable mentoring, recognition of innovation, and fair evaluation, enabling junior artisans to develop creative capacity and autonomy without compromising tradition or collective identity.

This study is limited by its focus on a single weaving community, so generalization should be approached cautiously. Moreover, it has yet to explore in depth the dynamics of resistance or negotiation strategies employed by junior weavers in confronting symbolic domination. Future research could adopt comparative approaches across regions or craft types to test the consistency of symbolic violence reproduction mechanisms. Longitudinal and participatory studies are also needed to understand changes in power relations over time and the impact of policy interventions on transforming symbolic structures in women's craft labor.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that symbolic violence in the Kediri ikat weaving industry is reproduced through relational mechanisms, social surveillance, and the internalization of cultural norms in subtle yet systematic ways. Corrective practices, verbal discipline, aesthetic evaluation, and unequal access to training are accepted by junior female weavers as a natural part of the "craft culture." Tradition-based habitus, doxa, and intergenerational authority reinforce seniority legitimacy while constraining creative expression and the autonomy of junior artisans. Javanese social norms and economic vulnerability moderate these processes, resulting in the internalization of domination, hierarchical stability, and the continuity of ikat weaving traditions. Symbolic violence operates not only through coercion but also via implicit consent, internalization, and the reinforcement of symbolic capital, forming a cycle of intergenerational power reproduction.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Diah Handayani: Conceptualization; Data Curation; Formal Analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Writing Original Draft. **Aniello Iannone**: Conceptualization; Visualization; Writing Review & Editing.

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