

## The Existence of *Tanjakas* a Cultural Heritage That Must Be Preserved

Syarifuddin<sup>1\*</sup>, Supriyanto<sup>2</sup>, Tita Amalia<sup>3</sup>, Khovivah Ananda Putri<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1234</sup>Sriwijaya University, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: syarifuddin@fkip.unsri.ac.id

### Abstract

#### Keywords:

*cultural identity;*  
*cultural preservation;*  
*local wisdom; tanjak*

Cultural diversity inherited from every previous generation creates what is often called local wisdom, giving the area a unique socio-cultural identity. It cannot be any truer with Palembang with its many cultural wealth, one of which is a form of headdress or headband called *Tanjak*. This study investigates the existence of this culture from how it first got into the people of Palembang to today where even the city government has a mandate of making it an obligatory uniform for city officials on Fridays. to carry out this investigation, this study uses the descriptive qualitative method. The data to be analysed come from personal interviews (with experts on the matter) and literature or documentation studies. Initial results show that the government's move was to preserve and further develop *tanjak* as a part of Palembang's cultural wealth and educate the people regarding the need to guard and preserve their local wisdom.

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### 1. Introduction

Every society, group or entity develops with a certain identity or way of life that creates cultural diversity with enough time. This sort of culture runs by a set of standards or codes of behaviour embedded in the society's customs, traditions, values and norms, making it a complete way of life (Adekola & Egbo, 2016; Na'am et al., 2019).

This general diversity in customs, beliefs, and socio-cultural concepts is one of the wealth of Indonesian (Faishal et al., 2019; Maysarah & Nugraheni, 2019; Raharjo, 2005). With so many customs, it certainly has an influence on society. Cultural diversity is passed down from one generation to the next, which becomes the identity of a certain social group and can even become a certain regional culture where these people live (Fatmawati, 2021; Hikmawati, 2017). Such wealth can be seen in a city like Palembang, which has a diversity of cultures, traditions, customs, arts, culinary and architecture or typical Palembang ornaments which makes this city very rich in local culture that can be used as a cultural identity that makes Palembang proud (Akib, 1980; Febriyanti, 2020).

Palembang, the largest city in Sumatra Selatan, has experienced many phases in the development of its complex city conditions, which started from the traditional period of Palembang to the modern era today (Arbi, 2019). The period that Palembang has passed includes the period of royalty, colonialism, to the period of independence (Saputro, 2021; Setyawati et al., 2018; Sumiyati, 2021). This of course brings many developmental phases that Palembang goes through and creates even more cultural diversity, one of which is *tanjak* which is used as a traditional headband for the people of Palembang.

*Tanjak* headband decoration is a headdress made of *songket* cloth which is commonly worn by *sultans*(kings), princes and Malay aristocrats. *Tanjak* is a Malay headband with high spiritual and cultural values. *Tanjak* itself is a hereditary heritage that has existed since Palembang Sultanate. *Tanjak* has become one of the clothes worn by the kings during Palembang Sultanate, consisting of traditional clothing (namely the Baju KurungCekakMusang), traditional trousers (namely *songket* cloth), and a headdress(namely *tanjak*). This traditional dress is often used in attending a traditional ceremony worn by the *sultans* of Palembang (Sunarto & Suherman, 2017). At this time, *tanjak* still exists and is one of Palembang's identities. Even now, *tanjak* has been made a Governor's Regulation and ratified by the Sumatra Selatan People's Representative Council as one of the mandatory office ornaments that must be in office buildings across Palembang.

The emergence of *tanjak* was actually during the Malay Sultanate of Malacca. Even before that time, *tanjak* had begun to be used by the people to become one of the mandatory clothes used when meeting the King (Iskandar, 2018)(Iskandar, 2018). Over time, *tanjak* as a headband has developed in both its types and forms. Even the forms of *tanjak* have been modified according to the wearer's tastes of the many Malay *tanjaks* available, the Solok/Suluk*tanjak* is one of the most popular *tanjaks* originating from Malaysia. Solok/Suluk*tanjakis* commonly used by officials in sultanate. Even of the many types of *tanjak*, the Solok/Suluk*tanjak* is one of the most sought after by the Malay community, especially Riau Malays (Afandy, 2018).

In Palembang itself, *tanjak* has a big enough meaning for the people of the city, where it has been considered the cultural identity of Palembang. Just like *blangkon*, which is synonymous with Java, so is *tanjak* with Palembang, as it is very attached and has become a hallmark of the Malay nation, especially the people of Palembang. It is one of the reasons the Sumatra Selatan Provincial Government ratified the Governor's Regulation regarding *tanjak* as the official clothes of government offices every Friday. It is an effort made by the government on local wisdom in Sumatra Selatan so that it continues to develop and be preserved.

The stipulation of *tanjak* as Palembang's identity is not only because *tanjak* is a traditional Palembang dress, but there is a meaning and philosophy behind *tanjak* itself. There are several opinions of experts regarding the philosophy of *tanjak*. Mr. HeriSutanto, a member of the Sumatra Selatann arts and culture community, explained that *tanjak* contains philosophy surrounding ones and to be stepped on, but to be held by the head. It means love for the homeland or the motherland.

However, it is different from the opinion of Mr. Kemas Ari Panji, one of the historians of Palembang, who said that there was a misunderstanding about the philosophy of *tanjak*. From the results of an interview with him, he said that *tanjak* has a massive meaning as Palembang's cultural identity. According to him, the word *tanjak* has the same meaning as

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the word *nanjak*, which in Palembang's language means to rise or to get higher. This is closely related to the triangular shape of *tanjak* that shrivels up, which also means God Almighty. So, it can be concluded that the philosophy of *tanjak* itself is if someone wants to be elevated, then ask the creator (God). *Tanjak* is exalted, not something that is stepped on.

Some of relevant, previous research used as a reference and starting point in this study includes "Eksistensi Budaya Alee Meunari di Desa Batee Kecamatan Arongan Lambalek Meulaboh Kabupaten Aceh Barat (The Existence of *Alee Meunari* Culture in Batee Village, Arongan Lambalek Meulaboh District, West Aceh)" by Ayuni, Supadmi, and Hartati. In the study, it was proven that this culture still exists and develops as a regional culture owned by West Aceh. The will of the people who continue to preserve this culture is one of the influential factors in the development of *Alee Maunari's* cultural existence (Ayuni et al., 2017).

Another relevant research is an article from Local Wisdom journal entitled "Structural System and Local Cultural Wisdom in The Traditional Architecture of Kenali Lampung Which is Currently Starting to be Rare" by Putri et al. The results of the study prove that the culture and local wisdom contained in Kenali's traditional architecture must be developed and preserved by the younger generation, especially their descendants so that the values taught and left as a legacy by their ancestors do not become extinct quickly (Putri et al., 2022).

Another previous research is entitled "Eksistensi Kesenian Besutan Sebagai Identitas Budaya Kabupaten Jombang (The Existence of *Besutan* Art as a Cultural Identity of Jombang)" by Muazaroh, Ruja, and Wahyuningtyas. The study results indicate that *Besutan* art is currently very rare, something that the government must continue to preserve to keep existing and developing, and that the community can still enjoy it, especially in Jombang (Muazaroh et al., 2021).

The update from this study is that the discussion of *tanjak* is usually not far from traditional Malay clothing, especially Palembang. In this study, we discuss *tanjak* as a cultural heritage that must be preserved by ratifying various regulations in Sumatra Selatan regarding *tanjak*. From the background that has been presented above, the formulation of the problem obtained within this study is 1) the history of *tanjak*, 2) the development of *tanjak* in Sumatra Selatan, and 3) efforts made by the government to preserve *tanjak*. From the formulation of this problem, the appropriate title for this study would be "The Existence of *Tanjakas* a Cultural Heritage That Must Be Preserved."

## 2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method with an anthropological approach to collect primary and secondary data (Sugiyono, 2013). Primary data sources are data from historians, humanists, and Palembang City Culture Service, while secondary data sources come from previous and relevant research, namely from articles, journals, theses, books and so on. In this study, the data type used is qualitative, which will then form descriptive data that are interconnected with each other and contain a written report (Rasimin, 2018).

With the qualitative research method in mind, data collection techniques that are used are observation, interviews, documentation studies, and literature studies (Khan, 2014; Sobiatin et al., 2020; Sutopo, 2006). If seen from the data types described earlier and the discussion that will be studied in this study, it can be concluded that this study is mainly

library research or literature study. In addition, this study also uses the literature method where data collection techniques are in the form of secondary data sources or written data sources that can be obtained from journals, books, theses, and other relevant authorities (Danial & Wasriah, 2009).

in addition to using the literature method, this study also obtained information through interviews with informants from Palembang historians such as Mr. KemasAripanji and Mr. RM Ali Hanafiah. to be able to conduct interviews with informants. We directly met the informants at their homes or work, conducting a structured interview (Usman et al., 2014). In contrast, the documentary study technique is carried out by observing the images related to the research results (Creswell, 2010). in addition to the results of interviews, we also attended two seminarsentitled “Ikat dan PenutupKepalaLaki-lakiSumatra Selatan (Headband and Head Covering for Men of Sumatra Selatan)” and “Kain TradisionalSumatra Selatan (Traditional Fabrics of Sumatra Selatan)” with Mr. Muhammad Idris, Mr. RM Ali Hanafiah, Mr. Muhammad toyeb and Mr. AufaSyahrizal.

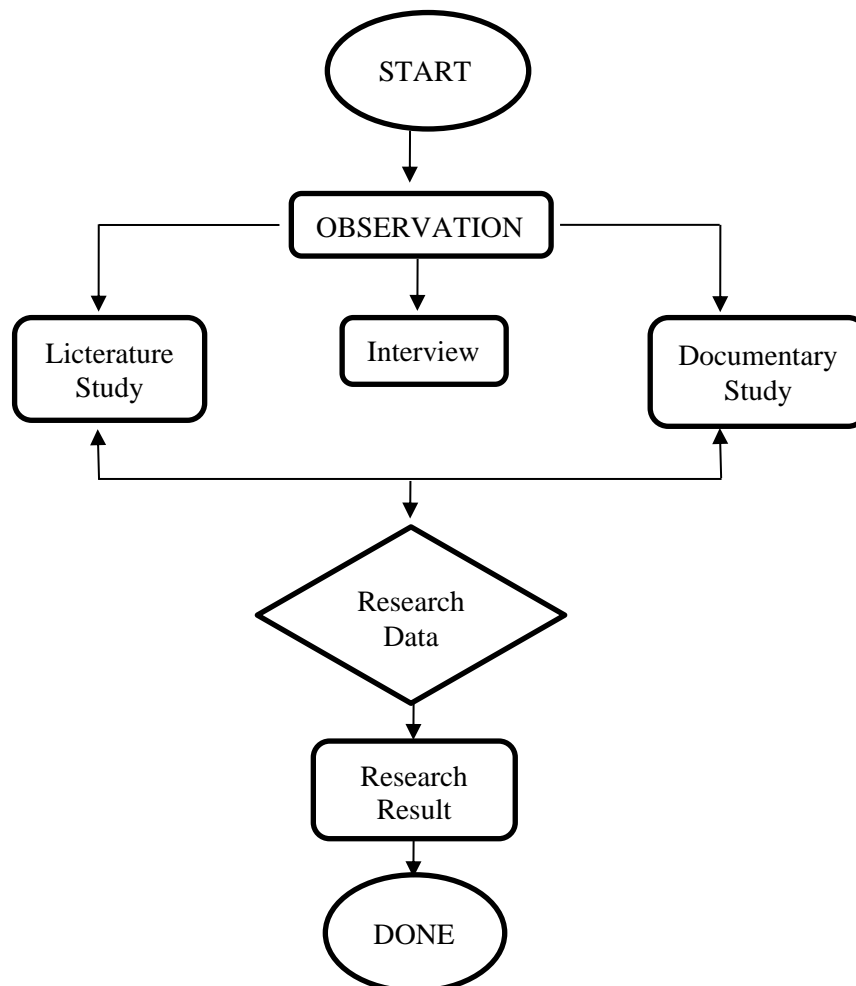


Diagram 1. Research Flow Chart

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## 3. Findings and Discussion

### History of *Tanjak*

*Tanjak* is a type of headdress that has existed for a long time in Malayan countries, especially the Malacca Sultanate. At that time *tanjak* was used as a headband or head covering to make the people look neat when meeting the king and other important people at that time. The Malays of Malacca at that time were obliged to make a long rectangular cloth that was folded and formed into a head covering and then tied to the head which must be used during official royal ceremonies. *Tanjak* is an accessory that is quite important in the use of Malay clothing, and is considered the politeness of Malay people in dressing in their daily lives (Manisah, 2019).

Men's head coverings or headbands are not just *tanjak*. There are several types of headbands, such as *tekolok* and *destar*. Headbands are popular and are often worn by all social circles, from the common people to the masters on the throne. Some headbands or head coverings that developed at that time had visible differences, which could be seen from the shape of the coils. The coils that taper upwards using quality fabrics and the thickly layered coils are the hallmark of *tekolok*, while *destar* has a characteristic of thin and low coils. Meanwhile, *tanjak* has almost the same characteristics as *tekolok* but is thinner and more concise (Iskandar, 2018:12).

Malay traditional clothing is a manifestation of the Malay culture itself, where the shape, structure, function, ornamentation, and manufacturing method have certainly existed from past time and passed down from one generation to the next, serving as a form of preserving the culture. One of the main components of Malay culture is Malay traditional clothing. This traditional Malay dress was formed and explicitly designed by the Malay community by prioritizing creativity and aesthetics as well as the meaning contained therein (Handoko, 2017). Likewise, it is true with *tanjak* itself, which was created as a manifestation of the high value of dress in the Malay tradition.



Figure 1. The use of Malay traditional clothes and *tanjak*<sup>1</sup>  
Source: Afandy, 2018

<sup>1</sup> *Tanjak* means ascending, meaning that the person who wears the climb will be prayed for a better life, such as his marwah, his degree, and his sustenance.

### The Developments *Tanjakin* Sumatra Selatan

Since ancient times, specifically during the Stone Age, people had been using headbands—in one form or another—because thousands of years ago, there has been a tradition of elevating headbands. Then in the Hindu-Buddhist era, people at that time also used a form of head cover or headband, as evidenced by the existence of a headband used by the statues of the Hindu-Buddhist era, namely the statue in Gumai and the statue in Lahat (i.e. the wall of the 6-8m high statue has a sculpture by showing the culture of elevating the headband). According to archaeologists, is the influence of the *nirleka* era or the same stone age, by looking at the *nekara*. Then on the wall there is also a sculpture of footwear, which proves that at that time our ancestors knew footwear in their daily lives as well.

The development of the headband in Palembang is different from the headband in Gumai because the headband in Gumai has a powerful Chinese influence. The statue *dilahat* is the only statue in Indonesia that uses Arnet, a sculpture in the statue depicting a thin head covering. The history of tradition of covering the head of the Indonesian people has existed for thousands of years. *Tanjak* Melayu Malacca was originally only made of long rectangular cloth which was then folded. However, with time changes, the folds became more intricate and beautiful. The high creativity of the Malay community makes many variations *tanjak*'s that are modified according to the requests of the wearer. The results of this modification gave rise to several new motifs and patterns that contain even more social values. One of them is a pattern that indicates a person's degree. Then the motifs and patterns that develop become the differentiator. However, along with the coming of independence, the popular *tanjak* at that time faded slightly with the emergence of the new styles of headband at that time, namely *peci* (a kind of Islamic cap). It is none other because the Palembang kingdom merged with Indonesia's government systems. It was only getting more prominent because of the strong influence of Islam that developed at that time.

Along with the changing times, styles of people's headbands changed too, looking more beautiful and attractive. However, even though this headband has been modified in such a way, it still sits within one set of rules that define it. In the case of Malay *tanjak*, it has some components representing it as a manifestation of the high value of dress in Malay tradition. Even though there have been a lot of *tanjak*'s that have been modified according to the requests of the wearer, it doesn't change the core technique in folding this *tanjak*. The folding technique must remain by the proper rules. In its use, *men only use tanjak* like other head coverings such as *kopiah* or *peci*.

Cloths wrapped around the head as a headband is one of the typical dressing for Malay men. The shape of the cloth used is quite diverse, and the art of winding is also varied. Malay people call this head dressing *tanjak*. Just as *blangkon* is synonymous with Java, *tanjak* is closely related to Malay. The results of the craftsmanship and creativity of the Malays in the past gave rise to types of *tanjak* called *elangmenyongsongangin* (eagles meeting with the wind), *tebingruntuh* (falling cliffs), *belalaigajah* (elephant trunks), *pialayam* (chicken wattles) and so on. Giving this name is not necessarily without reason, as the naming has been adapted to the shape of *tanjak* so that it can be trendy in Malay.

The development of the Malay *tanjak* influenced the emergence of Palembang *tanjak*. Palembang *tanjak* emerged during Palembang Sultanate in the 18th century. Its initial philosophy was a form of resistance against the Javanese, where the Malay people wanted to show that the Malays had the same position as the Muslims and that only faith distinguished them before God.

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**Table 1.** The form of resistance of the people of Palembang

Resistance Form	Explanation
Twisted Headband	If the Javanese people put the high part behind and the lower part in front, Palembang people do it the other way around.
The <i>keris</i> was moved from the back to the front	If the Javanese <i>keris</i> is placed on the back, Palembang people do the opposite.

The *Serat Konda* Manuscript describes the origin of the Palembang people (and it explains that Palembang people are of Javanese descent).

Palembang *tanjak* was originally a *tanjak* made of *batik* cloth. The Palembang *tanjak* made of *songket* cloth was introduced and made because of the arrival of President Suharto who visited the city. It was done because the people of Palembang at that time wanted to show a characteristic of their own people, so a new style of *tanjak* was made from *Songket* cloth. Before being made into *tanjak*, *songket* cloth was only used as a scarf.

In the past, the use of *tanjak* was combined with a short *kebaya* or *kebaya lando*, or people called it *lanjungan*. in addition, there were also *calanabelabas*, *sewet*, and there was *keris*. People also combined it with a closed suit. However, nowadays there is a change in the use of *tanjak*, which is combined with the use of other attributes in the form of *beskap*/clothes.

The types of Palembang *tanjak* consist of *tanjakkepundang*, *tanjakmeler*, *tanjakbelanumbang*, and *ikat-ikat ketangbekarem*. There are many types of *tanjak*, the only difference being the type of material used. Along with the development along many eras, there have been many types of *tanjak* circulating in the people of Sumatra Selatan. According to Mr. Ali Hanafiah, this is not a problem as long as the philosophy of *tanjak* remains in strongly held.



**Figure 2.** Types of *tanjak* in Palembang<sup>2</sup>  
Source: KemasAripanji, personal documentation

<sup>2</sup> Tanjak that is often used today is actually not a Palembang Tanjak, but is a climb that originally came from the Sriwijaya Kingdom. Tanjak now has a height with an elongated triangular shape, while the original triangular shape was low. The difference is in the folds that are on the tanjak itself. If the original fold is on top. While the common one without folds



Figure 3. The typical *tanjak* of Palembang<sup>3</sup>  
 Source: RM Ilmi, personal documentation



Figure 4. Songket *Tanjak*<sup>4</sup>  
 Source: Frenlyshoop Libraries

### The Government's Efforts to Preserve *Tanjak*

Palembang is very synonymous with Malay culture. It is even often called Palembang Malay. Malay itself is a book that has very long chapters on culture and history. But with the many cultures of Malays, some of them are slowly disappearing with time. An example is *tanjak*, a cultural heritage that must be preserved. Efforts made in preserving culture can be made in various ways. The government's efforts to preserve *tanjak* are as follows:

Table 2. Regional regulations regarding *tanjak*

Local regulation	Rule Type
<i>Perwali</i> Number 3 of 2018 was ratified by the Mayor	Traditional clothes that are used as official clothes for civil servants are used every Friday.
Governor's regulation ratified by Sumatra Selatan People's Representative Council in 2021	Every office building in Sumatra Selatan must use a <i>tanjak</i> ornament at the entrance gate.

*Tanjak* is one of the identities of the people of Palembang. in this regard, Sumatra Selatan provincial government has made a governor regulation which Sumatra Selatan

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *tanjak* songket which is often used today in events held



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People's Representative Council has ratified. The regulation requires every office building in Sumatra Selatan, especially Palembang, to use the mandatory ornament, namely *tanjak*, at the front gate of the office as a form of cultural identity. The policy implemented by the government is considered the first step in maintaining the local culture that is owned.

After the Sumatra Selatan provincial government ratified this governor regulation, several offices and tourist attractions started to build their *tanjak* ornaments. So far, from the observations of this study, several offices and tourist attractions that have used *tanjak* as office ornaments are as follows:



Figure 5. *Tanjak* ornaments at Griya Agung<sup>5</sup>

Source: Author's documentation



Figure 6. *Tanjak* ornaments at the Department of Energy and Mineral Resources of Sumatra Selatan<sup>6</sup>

Source: Author's documentation

<sup>5</sup> gate that uses a *tanjak* model, to improve Palembang local wisdom

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*



Figure 7. *Tanjak* ornaments at SMA Negeri 1 Palembang<sup>7</sup>  
Source: Author's documentation



Figure 8. *Tanjak* ornaments at SMK Negeri 3 Palembang<sup>8</sup>  
Source: Author's documentation



Figure 9. *Tanjak* ornaments at SMA Negeri 3 Palembang<sup>9</sup>  
Source: Author's documentation

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>8</sup> gate that uses a tanjak model, to improve Palembang local wisdom

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

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Figure 10. *Tanjak* ornaments in LebakCindo Radial<sup>10</sup>

Source: Author's documentation

Some of the pictures above are the results of observations in the form of personal documentation. During the observation, it was found that several offices have built *tanjak* ornaments as their office identity. This is very good progress, where the regional regulation ratified by the Sumatra Selatan People's Representative Council can be welcomed by several offices, educational institutions, and tourist attractions in Palembang. The efforts made by the government are considered sufficient to make *tanjak* still exist now and become a local culture that must be preserved.

However, before the local regulation was passed regarding *tanjak* ornament at the Palembang office, the regional government had already established regional regulations regarding traditional clothing that civil servants must use as official clothing. The use of traditional clothes of Palembang's characteristics was finally realized through Palembang Mayor's Regulation (*Perwali*). Friday is also mandatory for Civil Servants (PNS) in Palembang to wear traditional clothing. *Perwali* Number 3 of 2018 was ratified by the Mayor of Palembang on Monday, Jan 15 2018.

The types of traditional clothing recommended on Fridays are *TelukBelango* men's clothing, *tajung sarong*, *tanjak* or plain black *kopiah*, *badong* belt and *terompak* sandals. Women's clothing includes long straight brackets up to the knee, gold colored iron necklaces, *tajung* or *japri* cloth, and scarves. Because Friday coincides with Muslims' worship time, male employees can use a black *kopiah*.

The mandate was given to civil servants in Palembang city government and circulated to various other agencies, such as banks, hotels, shopping centers, state-owned enterprises (BUMN), and private-owned enterprises (BUMS). This regional regulation is an effort made by the government to revive and preserve their local wisdom.

<sup>10</sup> monument in the form of a climb located in Lebak Cindo Radial, serves to commemorate that *tanjak* is one of the cultures in Palembang



Figure 11. PNSof Palembang's Department of Culture and tourism wearing traditional Palembang clothes

Source: Nefri Inge, personal documentation

After several years, the government issued and ratified another regional regulation on *tanjak* as a mandatory ornament for Palembang offices. However, with the ratification of this regulation, there are pros and cons. According to one member of the Sumatra Selatan People's Representative Council, Mr. Muhammad Toyeb, who also participated in the ratification of the regional regulation, this regional regulation is in itself a reasonable effort made by the government to be able to preserve its local culture. However, he thought that making a headband that should be worn on the head as an office architectural ornament was quite misplaced. In contrast, Palembang is architecturally distinctive with its pyramid-shaped building. It needs to be studied and explored by Palembang experts and historians.

#### 4. Conclusion

The cultural diversity in an area is a local wisdom that should become the area's identity. So is the case with Palembang, which has a variety of local wisdom and is certainly the city's cultural identity. *Tanjak* is them. Even before the founding of the Palembang Sultanate, this headband or head covering already existed. However, the use of the name *tanjak* itself became popular since Palembang Sultanate's establishment. The existence of *tanjak* as a form of Palembang culture is undeniably experiencing ups and downs. It is what makes the Sumatra Selatan provincial government make several efforts to preserve *tanjak* as local wisdom that should still be developed until now.

Efforts made by the government can be seen in making several regional regulations regarding *tanjak*. Such regional rule was created in 2018 regarding Civil Servants who must wear traditional clothes at work like *tanjak* on Fridays. It didn't stop there, as the government also ratified a regulation regarding *tanjak* as a mandatory ornament for Sumatra Selatangovernment offices.

However, ratifying this latter regulation experienced many pros and cons because Palembang itself already has an architectural identity in the form of a pyramid house. However, the regulation of *tanjak* as an office ornament received a fairly good response, where some offices, educational institutions, and tourist attractions have already started doing or making it a part of the ornaments of their building. In conclusion, it can be said that the making of this regional regulation regarding *tanjak* is an effort to preserve the local

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culture of Palembang and also shows that the existence of *tanjak* in Palembang society is still maintained until now.

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## Interviews

KemasAripanji (historian), 5 September 2021

R.M. Ali Hanafiah (cultural activist), 6 September 2021

HeriSutanto (Sumatra Selatan cultural activist), 2 October 2020

Seminar "Ikat dan Penutup Kepala Laki-laki Sumatra Selatan" in BalaputeradewaMuseum, 22 September 2021

- Muhammad Idris
- R.M Ali Hanafiah (Sumatra Selatan cultural activist)
- Muhammad toyeb (Sumatra Selatan People's Representative Council)

Seminar "Kain Tradisional Sumatra Selatan" in BalaputeradewaMuseum, 7 October 2021

- AufaSyahrizal (Head of Palembang's Department of Culture and tourism)