

DEMOGRAPHIC FOUNDATIONS OF MSME SUSTAINABILITY: EVIDENCE FROM TRADITIONAL LURIK WEAVING ENTERPRISES IN KLATEN

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Abstract

Traditional Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play an important role in sustaining local economies while preserving cultural heritage. In Indonesia, lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten represent a heritage-based industry facing sustainability challenges related to demographic and structural constraints. This study aims to provide a baseline descriptive analysis of the demographic and organizational characteristics of lurik weaving MSMEs as underlying conditions for sustainability. Using a quantitative descriptive design, primary data were collected through structured questionnaires from 30 active lurik weaving MSMEs selected via purposive sampling. Descriptive statistics were applied to examine gender, age, educational background, length of business operation, employment size, marketing reach, training experience, and product characteristics. The findings show that lurik weaving MSMEs are predominantly sustained by older female artisans with low formal education, long business tenure, and micro-scale labor structures. Most enterprises rely on local markets or intermediaries, have no prior training experience, and focus on basic lurik fabric and shawl production without product diversification. This baseline study provides an empirical reference for future analytical and policy-oriented research on the sustainability of heritage-based MSMEs.

Keywords: Demographic Characteristics; Heritage-Based Enterprises; Indonesia ; Lurik Weaving; Sustainability Baseline; Traditional MSMEs.

1. Introduction

Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) play a crucial role in supporting local economies and preserving cultural heritage, particularly in developing countries like Indonesia. Beyond their contribution to job creation and income generation, MSMEs rooted in traditional industries serve as guardians of intangible cultural assets, ensuring the continuity of traditional knowledge and skills across generations (Suprayitno et al., 2025). One example is the traditional lurik weaving

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industry in Klaten, Central Java, which represents not only an economic activity but also a socio-cultural identity deeply rooted in Javanese history (Noor et al., 2018; Safitri & Sundari, 2022).

Despite their cultural significance, lurik weaving MSMEs face increasing vulnerability in the contemporary marketplace. The dominance of mass-produced textiles, changing consumer preferences, and limited artisan regeneration have collectively weakened their competitive position (Prameswari & Fenitra, 2018; Aripin & Zuhriyah, 2025). These challenges have been further exacerbated in the post-pandemic period, with many MSMEs experiencing declining revenues and operational instability (World Economic Forum, 2025). In Klaten, lurik weaving businesses are largely family-based micro-enterprises that rely on hand-loomed handlooms (ATBM) and inherited skills, making them highly vulnerable to demographic and structural constraints .

Existing sustainability studies on MSMEs tend to emphasize strategic capabilities such as innovation, financial literacy, or government support, often overlooking the fundamental role of demographic characteristics that shape business behavior and resilience. Age structure, gender composition, educational background, length of business operation, income level, workforce size, and marketing channels are important underlying conditions that influence how MSMEs respond to external pressures and internal constraints (Denrell & Powell, 2016). However, empirical documentation on these demographic underpinnings remains limited, particularly in the context of heritage-based MSMEs.

Therefore, this study aims to provide a preliminary, descriptive empirical overview of lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten by examining their demographic characteristics as underlying conditions for sustainability. By mapping these underlying conditions, this study offers a crucial contextual foundation for further analytical and policy-oriented research on MSME sustainability.

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design and Sample

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive research design to provide a baseline overview of the demographic and structural characteristics of traditional lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten, Central Java, Indonesia (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The descriptive approach is appropriate for capturing initial conditions and contextual realities without testing causal relationships. The population of this study consists of MSME owners or managers engaged in traditional lurik weaving activities in Klaten Regency. A total of 30 active lurik weaving MSMEs were selected using a purposive sampling technique. This sampling approach ensures the relevance of respondents to the study’s objective of mapping baseline conditions. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered directly to respondents. The questionnaire focused on key profile variables, including gender, educational background, length of business operation, number of

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employees, marketing reach, training experience, and product characteristics. The instrument was designed using simple and clear language to accommodate the respondents’ educational context. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical methods, specifically frequency counts and percentage distributions. The results are presented in tabular and narrative forms to provide a clear depiction of respondent characteristics as baseline empirical evidence. No inferential statistical analysis was performed, as the study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. All respondents participated voluntarily and were informed about the purpose of the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained, and the collected data were used solely for academic research purposes.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Respondent Characteristics

This section presents initial descriptive findings that depict the baseline conditions of lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten. The results do not aim to explain causal relationships but rather to establish an empirical starting point for understanding the demographic and structural foundations of sustainability in this traditional industry.

3.1.1 Gender Profile

The gender distribution of respondents represents an initial snapshot of the lurik weaving MSME landscape in Klaten. Female respondents dominate the sample, accounting for 80 percent of the total, while male respondents constitute 20 percent. This baseline finding confirms that lurik weaving is primarily sustained by women artisans and entrepreneurs. As an initial condition, this gender composition reflects the socio-cultural organization of weaving activities at the household and community levels and provides an important reference point for future analyses on gendered sustainability dynamics.

Table 1. Gender Profile

Profile	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	24	80
	Male	6	20

Table by Author

3.1.2 Educational Background

The educational profile of respondents serves as a baseline indicator of human capital within lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten. More than half of the respondents (53.3 percent) completed only

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elementary school, followed by junior high school graduates (40 percent), with only a small fraction attaining senior high school education (6.7 percent). This initial distribution highlights that most enterprises operate with limited formal educational resources. As baseline data, this profile suggests that subsequent capability development and innovation efforts will likely build upon experiential rather than formal knowledge foundations.

Table 2. Educational Background

Profile	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Educational	Elementary school	16	53,3
	Junior High School	12	40
	Senior High School	2	6,7

Table by Author

3.1.3 Length of Business Operation

The length of business operation reflects the baseline survival characteristics of lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten. All respondents have operated their businesses for more than ten years, with durations ranging from 10 to 35 years. This initial evidence indicates strong business persistence and continuity within the sector. However, as baseline information, business longevity should be interpreted as survival rather than growth, providing a reference context for future studies examining transformation or upgrading trajectories.

Table 3. Length of Business Operation

Profile	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Length Of Business	10 - 15 years	7	23,3
	16 - 20 years	6	20
	21 - 25 years	6	20
	26 - 30 years	5	16,7
	31 - 35 years	6	20

Table by Author

3.1.4 Employment Size

Employment size is presented as a baseline structural characteristic of lurik weaving MSMEs. The majority of enterprises (90 percent) operate with only one employee, while the remaining enterprises employ two workers. This initial condition confirms the micro-scale nature of these businesses and highlights limited labor absorption at the starting point of analysis. Such baseline information is essential for contextualizing subsequent discussions on scalability, productivity, and workforce development.

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Table 4. Employment Size

Profile	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Employee Size	1 employee	27	90
	2 employee	3	30

Table by author

3.1.5 Marketing Reach

The marketing reach of lurik weaving MSMEs is described here as a baseline market orientation. Most respondents (70 percent) sell their products within the local Java market, with only a very small proportion accessing markets outside Java. In addition, some enterprises rely on products being sold through intermediaries, rather than direct consumer engagement. This initial marketing structure indicates constrained market access and provides a foundational reference for future research on market expansion, value capture, and distribution channel transformation.

Table 5. Marketing Reach

Profile	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Marketing Reach	Market Local (Java)	21	70
	Market Local (Java) and outside java	1	26,7
	Sold through Intermediaries	8	3,3

Table by author

3.1.6 Age of Respondent

The age profile of respondents represents a baseline demographic condition of lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten. Most respondents are aged 57–69 years (56.7%), followed by those aged 46–56 years (23.3%), while only 20% fall within the 35–45 years age range. This distribution indicates that lurik weaving enterprises are predominantly sustained by older artisans, reflecting strong experiential knowledge and cultural continuity. However, the limited representation of younger business owners suggests weak generational regeneration, which may pose long-term sustainability challenges (Tjahjadi et al., 2024). As baseline evidence, this age structure provides important context for future studies examining innovation adoption, succession, and regeneration strategies in heritage-based MSMEs.

Table 6. Age

Profile	Description	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	35 to 45 years old	6	20
	46 to 56 years old	7	23,3
	57 to 69 years old	17	56,7

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Table by author

3.1.7 Training Experience

Training experience is identified as a baseline capacity condition among lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten. All respondents reported having no prior participation in formal training related to lurik development or business management. This absence of training exposure represents an important initial finding, indicating that existing practices are largely shaped by routine, inherited knowledge. As baseline data, this condition underscores the relevance of future interventions and longitudinal assessments of capacity-building outcomes.

3.1.8 Product Characteristics and Innovation

Product characteristics are presented as a baseline representation of production orientation. Respondents primarily produce lurik fabric and lurik shawls, with no evidence of downstream innovation into value-added fashion products such as clothing, bags, or accessories. This initial product profile indicates that lurik weaving MSMEs remain positioned at an early stage of the value chain. As baseline evidence, this finding provides a critical reference point for future studies examining innovation pathways and creative diversification.

4. Conclusion

This study provides a baseline descriptive portrait of the demographic and structural characteristics of traditional lurik weaving MSMEs in Klaten, Central Java. By examining respondent profiles related to gender, education, age, length of business operation, employment size, marketing reach, training experience, and product orientation, the study establishes an empirical starting point for understanding sustainability in heritage-based MSMEs.

The findings reveal that lurik weaving MSMEs are predominantly sustained by older, female artisans with limited formal education and long business tenure. These enterprises operate at a micro scale, employ very small numbers of workers, rely largely on local markets or intermediaries, and have no prior exposure to formal training programs. In addition, production remains focused on basic lurik fabrics and shawls, with no evidence of downstream product innovation. Together, these characteristics reflect strong cultural continuity and survival capability, yet also indicate structural constraints that limit innovation, market expansion, and value creation.

As a descriptive baseline study, this research does not aim to explain causal relationships or performance outcomes. Its main contribution lies in documenting foundational demographic and organizational conditions that shape the sustainability space of lurik weaving MSMEs. Recognizing these baseline conditions is a critical first step for future analytical, longitudinal, and policy-oriented research aimed at strengthening the sustainability of traditional textile enterprises while preserving their cultural significance.

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