



Exploring the Indigenous Fashion and Cultural Heritage of the Walak Tribe in Mamberamo Tengah, Papua Pegunungan

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Abstract. This study aims to examine the forms, meanings, and functions of the indigenous fashion of the Walak Tribe as part of cultural heritage in Mamberamo Tengah, Papua Pegunungan. This research employed a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design. Data were collected through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving 20 purposively selected informants, including traditional leaders, elders, craftsmen, community members, and youth. Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, supported by triangulation to ensure data validity. The findings show that Walak traditional fashion consists of various clothing items, ornaments, and accessories made from natural materials used in customary ceremonies and cultural activities. Each element of traditional attire carries symbolic meanings related to identity, social status, bravery, and the relationship between humans, nature, and ancestors. Furthermore, traditional fashion functions as a cultural identity marker and a means of intergenerational transmission of cultural values, despite challenges from modernization and social change.

Keywords: Cultural Heritage; Mamberamo Tengah; Papua Pegunungan; Traditional Attire; Walak Tribe.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is widely recognized for its cultural diversity, reflected in hundreds of ethnic groups with distinct traditions, languages, belief systems, and cultural expressions. Within this diversity, indigenous fashion holds an important place as part of cultural heritage because it represents identity, worldview, social values, and collective memory. Traditional clothing, ornaments, and accessories are not merely decorative, but also function as cultural symbols that convey meaning, social status, historical experience, and inherited knowledge. As material culture, indigenous fashion serves as a medium for preserving and transmitting cultural values across generations.

Papua is one of Indonesia's most culturally diverse regions, where indigenous communities continue to maintain their traditions despite pressures from modernization, globalization, and social change. Papuan communities possess various cultural artifacts, including traditional attire, ornaments, *sum* (traditional bags), *sabeab* (traditional men's cloth), and other material expressions that reflect local identity and resilience. (Kogoya & Halitopo, 2024b) showed that indigenous communities in *Yali* continue to preserve traditional knowledge and practices amid contemporary challenges. Previous studies have shown that indigenous communities in the Papua Highlands continue to preserve traditional knowledge, local cultural expressions, and socio-cultural values despite contemporary challenges (Kogoya & Halitopo,

2024a; Yikwa et al., 2025). This highlights the importance of documenting and safeguarding indigenous cultural heritage in Papua, especially for communities that remain underrepresented in research.

The study of indigenous fashion can be approached through cultural representation. (Hall et al., 2021) explains that representation is the process through which meaning is produced and exchanged within a culture. In this context, traditional clothing and ornaments act as systems of signs that convey values, beliefs, identity, and social relations. Previous studies also emphasize the role of Papuan material culture in preserving identity. Cultural objects such as *noken* show the close relationship between indigenous knowledge, natural materials, cultural identity, and heritage preservation (Avianto et al., 2021; Pikei & Sihombing, 2023; Rosyidah et al., 2026; Runtuboi et al., 2023) found that *noken* remains a strong symbol of Papuan identity after UNESCO recognition, although it faces commercialization. Similarly, (Rosyidah et al., 2026) demonstrated its continued relevance through technological documentation and classification.

Other studies show that Papuan material culture carries strong symbolic and social meanings. (Kadir, 2023) revealed that *koteka* functions as a symbol of cultural resilience and identity, while (Halitopo & Kogoya, 2024) found that Dani indigenous fashion contains semiotic meanings related to cultural values and social identity (Kadir, 2023; Kanem & Norris, 2018; Maryone, 2021; Runtuboi et al., 2023) also emphasized that traditional ornaments reflect social structure, customs, beliefs, and worldview. In addition, (Mambiew et al., 2023) showed that communities in the Mamberamo region maintain strong cultural values and social systems. These findings provide a foundation for understanding *Walak* traditional fashion as a cultural artifact closely linked to identity, customary values, ecological relations, and ancestral heritage.

Despite growing studies on Papuan material culture, most focus on *noken*, *koteka*, ornaments, and larger ethnic groups. Research on *Walak* indigenous fashion in Mamberamo Tengah, Papua Pegunungan remains limited. This limitation creates an academic gap in understanding how the traditional attire of the *Walak* Tribe is formed, how each clothing item and ornament carries symbolic meaning, and how indigenous fashion functions in preserving cultural identity. Therefore, this study is guided by three research problems: 1). What are the forms of traditional clothing, ornaments, and accessories used by the *Walak* Tribe; 2). What symbolic meanings are embedded in those fashion elements; and 3). How does indigenous fashion function as a medium of cultural heritage preservation among the *Walak* community. This study addresses that gap by examining the forms, meanings, and cultural significance of *Walak* fashion within cultural heritage preservation.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with an ethnographic approach to explore the indigenous fashion and cultural heritage of the *Walak* Tribe in Mamberamo Tengah, Papua Pegunungan. The ethnographic qualitative approach, as supported by (Halitopo & Kogoya, 2024), is suitable for examining cultural phenomena, social practices, and the meanings of traditional artifacts from the perspective of community members, enabling an in-depth understanding of symbolic meanings, functions, and cultural values embedded in traditional attire and ornaments. The study was conducted in Mamberamo Tengah Regency, Papua Pegunungan Province, Indonesia, particularly in selected *Walak* Tribe settlements where customary ceremonies, craft activities, and daily cultural practices remain actively maintained. This site was chosen due to its role as a key cultural canter of the *Walak* community. Fieldwork lasted for three months, covering observation, data collection, and follow-up verification to ensure data accuracy through triangulation.

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observation involved direct engagement with cultural practices related to traditional fashion in both daily and ceremonial contexts, while interviews explored meanings, functions, and cultural values from selected informants. Documentation included photographs, recordings, and archival materials related to traditional clothing and ornaments. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their knowledge and involvement in *Walak* cultural practices. In this ethnographic study, they are referred to as informants rather than samples, as they provide rich contextual information rather than statistical representation. The informants consisted of traditional leaders, elders, craftsmen, community members, and youth engaged in cultural preservation (see Table 1).

Table 1. The Details of the Participants.

No	Participant Category	Number of Participants	Criteria
1	Traditional Leaders of the <i>Walak</i> Tribe	3	Individuals who possess authority and knowledge regarding customary laws, cultural values, and traditional practices.
2	Elders and Cultural Custodians	4	Senior community members responsible for preserving and transmitting traditional knowledge and cultural heritage.
3	Traditional Craftsmen and Artisans	3	Individuals actively involved in producing traditional clothing, ornaments, and cultural accessories.
4.	Community Members Knowledgeable about Traditional Attire and Ornaments	5	Community members who understand the functions, meanings, and use of traditional fashion within the <i>Walak</i> Tribe.
5	Young Members Involved in Cultural Preservation Activities	5	Young people participating in cultural events, traditional ceremonies, and heritage preservation programs.

Data were analysed using the Interactive Model of Qualitative Data Analysis by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña in (Halitopo et al., 2025), involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. This process includes selecting and organizing data, presenting thematic descriptions, and interpreting patterns to ensure credible findings.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied triangulation of sources and methods, member checking, prolonged engagement, and peer debriefing to enhance validity and reduce bias. Ethical principles were strictly followed through informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, cultural sensitivity, and prior approval from community leaders in accordance with local customary norms.

3. FINDING

The results reveal that indigenous fashion plays a significant role in expressing cultural identity, preserving traditional values, and maintaining cultural heritage within the *Walak* community. Four major themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) forms of indigenous fashion, (2) symbolic meanings of traditional fashion, (3) the role of indigenous fashion in cultural identity, (4) efforts to preserve cultural heritage, and (5) Challenges to the Preservation of Indigenous Fashion.

Forms of Indigenous Fashion of the Walak Tribe

The study found that the indigenous fashion of the Walak Tribe consists of traditional clothing, body ornaments, head decorations, and accessories made primarily from natural materials obtained from the surrounding environment. Men's traditional fashion includes Aap Inayum and several ornaments or accessories, such as Nggenak Iri, Tidluksi, Inilkka Kedle, Wam Aik, Yanggwi Iri, Migak, Yerak Enggen, Yangge Aga, Telaga, Tedlok, Kebwe, Tega, Tige, Ngganggin, and Tige Ndok. Women's traditional fashion includes Nggenak Iri, Ebwe Tu, Kald, and Tadli. These items are made from natural materials such as tree bark fibres, leaves, cockatoo feathers, eagle feathers, animal fur, wild pig fang, shells, beads, and natural pigments. They are commonly used in customary ceremonies, cultural festivals, traditional dances, welcoming events, community gatherings, and other cultural activities. The use of natural materials in *Walak* indigenous fashion is consistent with broader Papuan traditional knowledge systems, in which locally available resources are transformed into meaningful cultural objects and tools (Kogoya & Halitopo, 2024a).

Traditional clothing is commonly worn during customary ceremonies, cultural festivals, community gatherings, and other important social events. Men and women wear different types of traditional attire according to their cultural roles and ceremonial functions. Traditional

ornaments, including necklaces, bracelets, headbands, and decorative accessories, complement the attire and enhance its cultural significance.

Symbolic Meanings Embedded in Indigenous Fashion

The findings indicate that indigenous fashion contains various symbolic meanings closely connected to the beliefs, values, and social structures of the *Walak* Tribe. A traditional leader explained that *Walak* traditional attire is not merely used to decorate the body, but also to show identity, dignity, and respect for ancestral customs: “*jadi kalau pakaian adat orang Walak itu bukan sekedar perhiasan saja. Pakaian adat itu jati diri kami, siapa kami, asal dari mana, dan bmgkn kita menghormati adat leluhur kami*” (Traditional Leader, Interview, 2026). An elder also stated that traditional ornaments contain inherited messages from ancestors and must be understood by younger generations: “*Hiasan adat yang kami orang walak pakai ini punya pesan dari nenek moyang. Anak-anak mudah harus mengerti arit dari setiap bulu, gelang, kalung, dan perlengkapan adat, supaya mereka tidak pakai saja, tetapi paham nilai yang diwariskan*” (Elder, Interview, 2026). These interview findings strengthen the interpretation that *Walak* indigenous fashion functions as a symbolic medium for expressing identity, customary values, and ancestral heritage. Indigenous ornaments and traditional attire may function as symbolic media through which communities express identity, social status, ecological relations, and ancestral values (Kadir, 2023; Maryone, 2021; Pikei & Sihombing, 2023; Runtuboi et al., 2023).

Specific ornaments symbolize courage, wisdom, leadership, respect, and social responsibility (Hall et al., 2021). Decorative patterns and materials used in traditional attire often reflect relationships between humans, nature, and ancestral spirits. Certain ornaments are reserved for customary leaders and individuals holding important social positions within the community.

The Indigenous Fashion as a Marker of Cultural Identity

The findings show that indigenous fashion plays a crucial role in preserving the cultural heritage of the *Walak* Tribe. The preservation of indigenous fashion should be understood not only as the conservation of material objects, but also as the protection of local knowledge, community identity, and intergenerational cultural transmission (Anggraeni et al., 2024; Avianto et al., 2021; Le et al., 2024).

Traditional fashion is frequently displayed during cultural ceremonies, welcoming events, traditional celebrations, and cultural exhibitions. Community members believe that wearing traditional attire demonstrates pride in their cultural heritage and contributes to the preservation of indigenous identity.

Indigenous Fashion and Cultural Heritage Preservation

The findings show that indigenous fashion plays a crucial role in preserving the cultural heritage of the *Walak* Tribe. Traditional knowledge regarding the production, use, and meanings of indigenous attire is transmitted from older generations to younger community members through observation, participation, storytelling, and cultural ceremonies (Anggraeni et al., 2024; Avianto et al., 2021; Le et al., 2024; Runtuboi et al., 2023).

Several cultural preservation practices were identified during the study, including: a) Teaching traditional crafting skills to younger generations, b) Organizing cultural festivals and customary ceremonies, c) Encouraging youth participation in cultural activities, d) Preserving traditional knowledge through oral traditions, and e) Promoting indigenous cultural heritage through educational and community programs.

Challenges to the Preservation of Indigenous Fashion

The study also identified several challenges affecting the preservation of indigenous fashion. These include modernization, changing lifestyles, the influence of global fashion trends, limited documentation of traditional knowledge, and declining interest among some younger community members. Modernization, environmental change, and shifting resource access may threaten the continuity of indigenous cultural practices that depend on natural materials and local ecological knowledge (Anggraeni et al., 2024; Runtuboi et al., 2023; Wenda et al., 2025).

The availability of natural materials used in producing traditional attire has become increasingly limited in certain areas due to environmental changes and shifting patterns of resource use. Participants expressed concerns that these challenges may threaten the long-term sustainability of traditional fashion practices if preservation efforts are not strengthened.

4. DISCUSSION

Traditional Clothing for Men (*Aap Inayum*)



Figure 1. The Traditional Fashion of *Walak* Men.

Nggenak Iri (Cockatoo Feather)

The *Nggenak Iri* is a traditional fashion ornament for men in *Walak* society, made from the feathers of a cockatoo. It is usually worn on the head during traditional ceremonies, cultural performances, and important customary events. The ornament enhances the appearance of the wearer and serves as a symbol of honour, courage, and cultural pride. For the *Walak* people, *Nggenak Iri* is an important component of traditional male attire and reflects the richness of their cultural heritage.

In addition to its decorative function, *Nggenak Iri* carries deep cultural and symbolic meaning. It represents a man's connection to his ancestors, community, and traditional values. During customary ceremonies, men wear *Nggenak Iri* to show respect for their cultural traditions and to express their identity as members of the *Walak* tribe. The continued use of this traditional ornament helps preserve indigenous knowledge and ensures that the cultural heritage of the *Walak* people is passed on to future generations (Anggraeni et al., 2024; Le et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2023, 2024).

Tidluki (The Fox Tail)

The *Tidluki* is a traditional fashion accessory for men in *Walak* society, made from the tail of a fox. It is commonly worn during traditional ceremonies, cultural festivals, and important customary events. As part of men's traditional attire, *Tidluki* enhances the appearance of the wearer and represents bravery, strength, and dignity. The use of this ornament reflects the close relationship between the *Walak* people and their natural environment, where animals play an important role in cultural symbolism.

Beyond its decorative and symbol function, *Tidluki* carries significant cultural meaning within the *Walak* community. It is often associated with masculine identity, leadership, and respect for ancestral traditions. During traditional gatherings, men wear *Tidluki* to demonstrate their connection to their cultural heritage and to honour the customs passed down through generations. By preserving the use of *Tidluki*, the *Walak* people continue to maintain and celebrate an important aspect of their indigenous fashion and cultural identity.

Inilkka Kedle (Testa Bracelet)

The *Inilkka Kedle* is a traditional bracelet worn by men in *Walak* society. This ornament is commonly made from natural materials and is used as part of traditional attire during customary ceremonies, cultural festivals, and important community gatherings. As a traditional fashion accessory, *inilkka kedle* enhances the appearance of the wearer and symbolizes strength, courage, and cultural identity. It is an important element of men's traditional dress and reflects the artistic skills of the *Walak* people.

It is a decorative purpose, *inilkka kedle* carries cultural and symbolic significance within the *Walak* community. The bracelet represents a man's connection to his heritage, ancestors, and social responsibilities. During traditional events, men wear *inilkka kedle* to demonstrate respect for customary values and to maintain the traditions passed down through generations. The continued use of this bracelet helps preserve the cultural heritage of the *Walak* tribe and highlights the importance of indigenous fashion in expressing identity and community pride.

Wam Aik (Pork Fang)

Wam Aik is a traditional fashion ornament for men in *Walak* society, made from the fang of a wild pig. It is commonly worn as a necklace or chest ornament during traditional ceremonies, cultural festivals, and customary gatherings. For the *Walak* people, *Wam Aik* is more than a decorative accessory; it symbolizes strength, bravery, and the skills of a man in hunting and protecting his community. As part of traditional attire, it contributes to the distinctive appearance of *Walak* men's fashion.

In *Walak* culture, *Wam Aik* holds important cultural and symbolic value. The ornament reflects a man's connection to nature, ancestral traditions, and community identity. Wearing *Wam Aik* during ceremonial events demonstrates respect for cultural customs and the values inherited from previous generations. The continued use of this traditional ornament helps preserve the indigenous fashion of the *Walak* tribe and serves as a reminder of the cultural heritage that remains important in contemporary *Walak* society.

Yanggwi Iri (Eagle Feather)

The *yanggwi iri* is a traditional fashion ornament for men in *Walak* society, made from eagle feathers. It is usually worn as a headdress or decorative accessory during traditional ceremonies, cultural performances, and important customary events. The eagle is admired for its strength, sharp vision, and ability to soar high above the land. Therefore, *yanggwi iri* symbolizes courage, leadership, wisdom, and honour. As part of traditional male attire, it enhances the appearance of the wearer and reflects the unique cultural identity of the *Walak* people.

Beyond its aesthetic function, *yanggwi iri* carries deep cultural and symbolic significance. The ornament represents a strong connection between the *Walak* people, their ancestors, and the natural world. Men who wear *yanggwi iri* during traditional ceremonies demonstrate their respect for customary values and their commitment to preserving tribal traditions. The continued use of eagle feathers in traditional fashion helps maintain the cultural heritage of the *Walak* tribe and ensures that important cultural knowledge is passed on to future generations.

Migak (Necklace)

Migak is a traditional necklace worn by men in *Walak* society as part of their cultural attire. It is usually made from natural materials such as beads, shells, animal teeth, or other locally available resources. Men wear *migak* during traditional ceremonies, cultural festivals, and important customary events. As a decorative accessory, the necklace enhances the appearance of the wearer while reflecting the artistic creativity and craftsmanship of the *Walak* people.

Beyond its decorative function, *Migak* carries important cultural and symbolic meanings. The necklace represents a man's identity, social status, and connection to his ancestral heritage. During customary gatherings, wearing *migak* demonstrates respect for traditional values and cultural practices that have been preserved for generations. The continued use of *migak* in traditional fashion helps maintain the cultural heritage of the *Walak* tribe and serves as a symbol of pride, unity, and respect for indigenous traditions.

Yerak Enggen (Long Tie)

Yerak enggen is a traditional long tie worn by men in *Walak* society as part of their ceremonial attire. This traditional accessory is commonly used during cultural festivals, customary ceremonies, and important community gatherings. Worn around the neck or across the body, *yerak enggen* enhances the appearance of the wearer and complements other traditional ornaments. It reflects the uniqueness of *Walak* men's fashion and demonstrates the community's rich cultural heritage.

In addition to its decorative purpose, *yerak enggen* holds cultural and symbolic significance. It represents respect for ancestral traditions, cultural identity, and social values within the *Walak* community. During traditional ceremonies, men wear *yerak enggen* as a sign of pride in their heritage and commitment to preserving indigenous customs. The continued use of this traditional long tie helps maintain the cultural legacy of the *Walak* tribe and ensures that traditional knowledge and values are passed on to future generations.

Yangge Aga (Dog Feather)

Yangge Aga is a traditional fashion ornament worn by men in *Walak* society. This accessory is made from dog fur and is commonly used during traditional ceremonies, cultural celebrations, and customary gatherings. As part of traditional male attire, *Yangge Aga* enhances the appearance of the wearer and reflects the cultural identity of the *Walak* people. The ornament demonstrates the community's close relationship with nature and the use of locally available materials in creating traditional fashion.

Beyond its decorative function, *Yangge Aga* carries important cultural and symbolic meanings. It represents bravery, loyalty, and respect for ancestral traditions within the *Walak* community. Men wear *Yangge Aga* during ceremonial events to express their pride in their cultural heritage and their connection to customary values. The continued use of this traditional ornament helps preserve the indigenous fashion of the *Walak* tribe and ensures that cultural knowledge and traditions are passed down from one generation to the next.

Telaga (Hand Tassel)

The *telaga* is a traditional hand tassel worn by men in *Walak* society as part of their ceremonial attire. This ornament is usually attached to the wrist or arm and is worn during traditional ceremonies, cultural festivals, and customary celebrations. As a decorative accessory, *Telaga* enhances the appearance of the wearer and complements other elements of traditional male fashion. It reflects the creativity and craftsmanship of the *Walak* people in producing culturally meaningful ornaments.

In addition to its decorative role, *Telaga* carries cultural and symbolic significance within the *Walak* community. It represents a man's connection to his cultural heritage, ancestral traditions, and social identity. During customary events, men wear *Telaga* to demonstrate respect for traditional values and community customs. The continued use of this hand tassel helps preserve the indigenous fashion of the *Walak* tribe and strengthens the transmission of cultural knowledge and traditions to future generations.

Tedlok (Belt)

Tedlok is a traditional belt worn by men in *Walak* society as an important part of their customary attire. It is commonly used during traditional ceremonies, cultural festivals, and other significant community events. The belt is worn around the waist to secure traditional clothing and to complement other traditional ornaments. As an essential element of *Walak* men's fashion, *Tedlok* not only serves a practical function but also contributes to the distinctive appearance of traditional dress.

Beyond its practical use, *Tedlok* holds cultural and symbolic significance within the *Walak* community. It represents discipline, responsibility, and respect for ancestral customs. During customary ceremonies, men wear *Tedlok* as a symbol of their cultural identity and their connection to the traditions inherited from previous generations. The continued use of *Tedlok* helps preserve the indigenous fashion of the *Walak* tribe and ensures that important cultural values and traditional knowledge are passed down to future generations.

As an element of traditional fashion, *Tedlok* also enhances the aesthetic appearance of ceremonial attire. Its continued use during cultural events serves as a visible expression of

respect for ancestral traditions and cultural values. Through the preservation of *Tedlok*, the *Walak* Tribe maintains an important aspect of its indigenous identity and promotes the continuity of its cultural heritage.

Kebwe (Water Guard)

The *Kebwe*, commonly known as the Water Guard, is one of the traditional cultural accessories used by the *Walak* Tribe in Mamberamo Tengah, Papua Pegunungan. This item is traditionally associated with protection, strength, and the close relationship between the *Walak* people and their natural environment. The *Walak* community highly respects water as a vital source of life, and *Kebwe* symbolizes the responsibility of safeguarding and preserving water resources for future generations.

The traditional ceremonies and cultural performances, *Kebwe* is often worn as part of indigenous attire to represent the role of guardianship and community leadership. The design and materials used in making *Kebwe* are usually derived from natural resources available in the surrounding environment, reflecting the tribe's deep ecological knowledge and sustainable way of life. Through its use, *Kebwe* serves not only as a decorative element but also as a cultural symbol that conveys important values of protection, responsibility, and respect for nature.

The cultural significance of *Kebwe* extends beyond its physical appearance. It embodies the *Walak* people's traditional wisdom regarding environmental conservation and communal harmony. As younger generations learn about the meaning and function of *Kebwe*, they gain a greater appreciation of their cultural identity and ancestral heritage. Therefore, preserving *Kebwe* as part of the *Walak* Tribe's traditional fashion is essential for maintaining cultural continuity and promoting awareness of indigenous values in contemporary society.

Tega (Spear)

Tega, or spear, is one of the most important traditional cultural objects used by the *Walak* Tribe. Traditionally, the spear serves as a hunting tool and a means of protection, reflecting the close relationship between the *Walak* people and their natural environment. In addition to its practical functions, *Tega* is also an integral part of indigenous fashion and ceremonial attire, particularly during customary ceremonies, cultural festivals, and traditional performances.

In *Walak* culture, *Tega* symbolizes strength, bravery, leadership, and responsibility. The spear represents the ability of individuals to protect their families, communities, and cultural values. It is often associated with courage and determination, qualities that are highly respected within the community. As a ceremonial accessory, the spear communicates the cultural identity and warrior spirit of the *Walak* people.

Furthermore, *Tega* reflects the indigenous knowledge and craftsmanship of the *Walak* Tribe. The process of selecting materials, crafting the spear, and maintaining its use demonstrates traditional skills that have been transmitted from one generation to another. These practices contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and reinforce the continuity of ancestral traditions.

Tige (Arrow)

Tige, or arrow, is one of the traditional cultural objects used by the *Walak* Tribe and forms an important part of their indigenous heritage. Traditionally, arrows are used together with bows for hunting and other subsistence activities that support the daily lives of the community. In addition to their practical function, arrows are also incorporated into ceremonial displays and traditional attire during customary ceremonies, cultural festivals, and cultural performances.

In *Walak* culture, *Tige* symbolizes precision, determination, courage, and preparedness. The arrow reflects the skills, discipline, and perseverance required for hunting and survival in the natural environment. As a cultural symbol, it represents the strength and resilience of the *Walak* people and their ability to adapt to the challenges of their surroundings.

Furthermore, *Tige* embodies the indigenous knowledge and craftsmanship of the *Walak* Tribe. The production of arrows requires specialized skills, including the selection of suitable materials, careful craftsmanship, and knowledge passed down through generations. These traditional practices contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage and reinforce the continuity of ancestral wisdom.

Ngganggin (Back Necklace)

Ngganggin, commonly known as the Back Necklace, is one of the traditional ornaments worn by the *Walak* Tribe as part of their indigenous fashion and cultural heritage. Unlike ordinary necklaces worn around the neck and chest, *Ngganggin* is positioned on the back as a decorative and symbolic accessory during customary ceremonies, traditional dances, cultural festivals, and other important social events. It is regarded as an essential component of traditional attire that enhances both the cultural and aesthetic value of ceremonial dress.

In *Walak* culture, *Ngganggin* symbolizes dignity, cultural identity, and respect for ancestral traditions. The ornament serves as a visible representation of the wearer's connection to the community and its cultural heritage. By wearing *Ngganggin* during ceremonial occasions, individuals express their commitment to preserving traditional customs and maintaining the values inherited from previous generations.

The *Ngganggin* reflects the artistic creativity and craftsmanship of the *Walak* people. The ornament is traditionally made from natural materials obtained from the surrounding environment and crafted using indigenous techniques passed down through generations. These practices demonstrate the community's knowledge of local resources and their ability to transform them into meaningful cultural artifacts.

Tige Ndok (Bow)

Tige Ndok, or bow, is one of the traditional cultural objects of the *Walak* Tribe and an important element of their indigenous heritage. Traditionally, the bow is used together with arrows for hunting and other subsistence activities that support the livelihood of the community. In addition to its practical function, *Tige Ndok* is also displayed during customary ceremonies, cultural festivals, and traditional performances as part of the cultural representation of the *Walak* people.

In *Walak* culture, *Tige Ndok* symbolizes strength, skill, patience, and responsibility. The bow reflects the ability of individuals to provide for and protect their families and communities. Its use requires concentration, discipline, and precision, qualities that are highly valued within the social and cultural life of the *Walak* Tribe. As a cultural symbol, the bow represents the resilience and self-reliance of the community in adapting to its natural environment.

Furthermore, *Tige Ndok* embodies the indigenous knowledge and craftsmanship of the *Walak* people. The process of making a bow involves careful selection of natural materials and specialized techniques that have been passed down through generations. This traditional knowledge demonstrates the community's deep understanding of local resources and their ability to utilize them sustainably.

Tige Ndok serves as a marker of cultural identity and ancestral heritage. During traditional ceremonies and cultural performances, the bow is displayed as a representation of the historical experiences, values, and traditions of the *Walak* Tribe. Its continued presence in cultural activities helps strengthen community pride and ensures the transmission of indigenous knowledge to younger generations.



Figure 2. The Traditional Fashion of *Walak* Women.

Nggenak iri (Cockatoo Feather)

Nggenak iri is a traditional ornament made from cockatoo feathers and is an important part of *Walak* culture. The feathers are usually worn on the head during traditional ceremonies, cultural festivals, and customary events. For the *Walak* women use to ceremonial activities, *Nggenak iri* is not only a decoration but also a symbol of identity, pride, and respect for their ancestors. It reflects the beauty and uniqueness of their cultural heritage.

In traditional *Walak* society, *Nggenak iri* has cultural and social significance. People wear it during special occasions to show their connection to the community and their respect for customary traditions. The use of *Nggenak iri* helps preserve the cultural values of the *Walak* tribe and teaches younger generations about their heritage. Through this traditional ornament, the *Walak* people continue to maintain and celebrate their rich cultural identity.

Ebwe tu (Traditional Bag)

Ebwe tu is a traditional bag used by the *Walak* women in their daily lives. It is usually made from natural materials collected from the surrounding environment and is carefully crafted by hand. The bag is commonly used to carry agricultural products, firewood, food, and other necessities. For the *Walak* community, *Ebwe tu* is not only a practical item but also an important part of their traditional lifestyle and cultural identity.

Beyond its practical function, *Ebwe tu* holds cultural significance within *Walak* society. The knowledge and skills required to make this traditional bag are passed down from one generation to another, helping to preserve indigenous women craftsmanship. During cultural events and traditional ceremonies, people may carry *Ebwe tu* as a symbol of their heritage and connection to their ancestors. As a result, *Ebwe tu* represents both the creativity of the *Walak* Women and their commitment to maintaining their cultural traditions.

Kald (Skirt for Married Women)

The *Kald* is a traditional skirt worn by married women in *Walak* society. It is an important element of traditional clothing and reflects the social status of a woman after marriage. The skirt is commonly worn during cultural ceremonies, customary gatherings, and community celebrations. For the *Walak* people, *Kald* is more than a piece of clothing; it symbolizes maturity, responsibility, and a woman's role within the family and community.

The use of *Kald* carries deep cultural significance and helps preserve the traditions of the *Walak* tribe. Married women wear this traditional skirt with pride as a representation of their cultural identity and respect for ancestral customs. Elders continue to pass down knowledge about the meaning and proper use of *Kald* to younger generations. Through this traditional

attire, the values, customs, and cultural heritage of the *Walak* people are maintained and celebrated across generations.

Tadli (Skirt for Unmarried Women)

The *Tadli* is a traditional skirt worn for women in *Walak* society. It is an important part of traditional clothing and reflects the cultural values of the community. The skirt is typically worn during customary ceremonies, cultural festivals, and other important social events. For the *Walak* people, *Tadli* serves not only as clothing but also as a symbol of a young woman's status and identity within the community.

In addition to its function as traditional attire, *Tadli* carries cultural and social meaning. It represents the preservation of ancestral traditions and the respect given to customary practices. Elders teach younger generations about the significance of wearing *Tadli*, ensuring that this cultural heritage continues to be valued and maintained. Through the use of *Tadli*, unmarried women express their connection to *Walak* culture and contribute to the preservation of their tribe's unique identity.

5. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the indigenous fashion of the *Walak* Tribe represents a significant aspect of their cultural heritage and traditional identity. The traditional attire worn by *Walak* men consists of various symbolic ornaments and accessories, including *Nggenak Iri* (Cockatoo Feather), *Tidluki* (Fox Tail), *Inilkka Kedle* (Testa Bracelet), *Wam Aik* (Pork Fang), *Yanggwi Iri* (Eagle Feather), *Migak* (Necklace), *Yerak Enggen* (Long Tie), *Yangge Aga* (Dog Feather), *Telaga* (Hand Tassel), *Tedlok* (Belt), *Kebwe* (Water Guard), *Tega* (Spear), *Tige* (Arrow), *Ngganggin* (Back Necklace), and *Tige Ndok* (Bow). Each item carries cultural meanings associated with bravery, leadership, social status, protection, ancestral values, and the close relationship between humans and nature.

Meanwhile, the traditional fashion of *Walak* women includes *Nggenak Iri* (Cockatoo Feather), *Ebwe Tu* (Traditional Bag), and *Tadli* (Skirt for Unmarried Women). These traditional items reflect feminine identity, social roles, cultural values, and the continuity of indigenous customs within the community. The materials, designs, and functions of these cultural objects demonstrate the *Walak* people's indigenous knowledge, creativity, and adaptation to their natural environment.

In conclusion, the traditional fashion of the *Walak* Tribe is not merely a form of clothing but also a cultural expression that preserves historical memory, social values, and ethnic identity. The implication of this study is that *Walak* traditional fashion should be preserved

through community-based cultural documentation, cultural education for younger generations, and the active involvement of traditional leaders, elders, craftsmen, women, and youth. Preservation efforts should not only focus on displaying traditional attire during ceremonies, but also on recording the names, materials, production techniques, symbolic meanings, and customary functions of each clothing item, ornament, and accessory. Therefore, this study provides an academic contribution to the documentation of indigenous cultural heritage in Papua Pegunungan and supports the strengthening of Walak cultural identity in the context of modernization.

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