
Perspective Javanese Employee on Pursuing Wealth Finding From an Ethnography Analysis

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Abstract

Problems economy can happen all over society. Both those who have income tall or those who have income low. The Javanese are Indonesia's most populous ethnic group, and the majority have migrated throughout the archipelago. Nevertheless, Javanese culture continues to permeate their daily activities and is transmitted to subsequent generations. A society's culture typically shapes a person's point of view, conduct, morals, and ethics, which may directly or indirectly influence how groups behave in everyday situations. Economic issues can arise in any community, largely because many people lack the ability to manage their finances responsibly. This study explores how Javanese people perceive financial planning and wealth accumulation. An ethnographic qualitative approach was employed, using in-depth interviews to collect data from Javanese employee respondents. The findings reveal that most respondents focus on wealth planning for future life security, with three main themes emerging: wealth accumulation, wealth preservation, and wealth planning. This study contributes to understanding the intersection between cultural values and financial behavior among Indonesia's largest ethnic group.

INTRODUCTION

Problems economy can happen all over society. Both those who have income tall or those who have income low. Problem This often appear because most of public Not yet understand How method manage income in a way right (Head, 2022). Management riches are part from knowledge economy that makes things easier somebody for develop, protect riches so that riches the can enjoyed in the future come moment somebody Already No productive again. Science management finance This can help somebody for know How method manage existing funds, what just type investment, investment strategy so that can also be enjoyed by experts' inheritance. Management wealth and technique for invest be one of matter important that is not can ignored, because We need something future protection and value (Birch, 2017; Damodaran, 2026; Greenwald et al., 2020; Pedersen, 2019).

The same tribe Can marked with existence similarities unique identity If compared to with other groups. Similarities identity This usually encompassing view life, belief, way thinking, arrangement society, model/type leadership that is believed in, and so on. Related with matter the interest something group culture covering sustainability characteristics that are identity self, in something group tradition which is treasure trove identity very much important.

View life is something abstraction from experience life (Rosenberg, 2024). View the formed from something method thinking and ways understand values, organization social, behavior behavior, events, and other things that originate from experience. View life This is A mental settings of experience life in its time Can develop something attitude inside life. Personality public Java Can categorized as an “Eastern personality” who also prioritizes life religious. Niels Mulder said that, view Javanese life is reflected in religious practices and beliefs, namely “*Javanism*” *Javanism* is view Javanese life and also their religion, which is more prioritizing peace inner self, harmony and balance, as well as attitude accept to all something that happens. Putting individual under groups, and groups under God Almighty. View the teach to be able to formed harmonious relationship between individual with himself alone, individual with individual others, and individuals with His God (Aries, 2025; Ene & Barna, 2015; Gherasim, 2024; Pallathadka et al., 2023).

The novelty of this research lies in several key contributions. First, this study applies ethnographic methodology rarely used in Indonesian financial behavior research to capture emic (insider) perspectives on wealth among Javanese employees (Rudnycky, 2024). Second, the research develops an empirically grounded typology of Javanese wealth management organized around three themes: wealth accumulation, wealth preservation, and wealth planning, derived directly from participant narratives through systematic coding. Third, this study examines how traditional Javanese philosophical concepts (such as *nrimo* or acceptance, *rukun* or harmony, and *guyub* or togetherness) manifest in contemporary financial decision-making. Fourth, the research provides cultural contextualization for existing financial literacy frameworks, demonstrating that universal financial principles are interpreted through culturally specific lenses. Fifth, this study contributes to the limited literature on Indonesian ethnographic finance, opening new avenues for culturally grounded financial education research (Ary, 2025; Khasanah et al., 2022; Komalasari et al., 2024; Pratikto et al., 2025).

The purpose of this research is to understand how Javanese employees perceive and pursue wealth. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) explore Javanese perspectives on wealth accumulation, including saving and investment behaviors (Shabrina et al., 2022); (2) examine how Javanese cultural values influence wealth preservation strategies (Fatmawati, 2021); (3) identify the role of future-oriented planning in Javanese financial decision-making (Rahmawati et al., 2026); and (4) develop an ethnographic account of how traditional Javanese worldviews interact with contemporary financial practices (Kamayanti & Ahmar, 2019).

The contribution of this research is both theoretical and practical (Stentoft & Rajkumar, 2018). Theoretically, this study enriches the literature on cultural finance by demonstrating how Javanese philosophical concepts shape financial behavior, extending existing work on Islamic finance and institutional wealth management. The study also contributes to ethnographic methodology by demonstrating its applicability to financial behavior research. Practically, this research offers insights for financial educators, policymakers, and product designers seeking to develop culturally appropriate financial literacy programs for Javanese communities. The findings may inform the design of financial education materials that resonate with Javanese values of future planning, family security, and measured accumulation rather than aggressive wealth maximization.

METHOD

Ethnography: Philosophy and Theory

Ethnography was method oldest in research qualitative for research social that has a number of characteristics namely (1) digging or research phenomenon social, (2) data is not structured; (3) cases or small sample; (4) done data analysis and data interpretation regarding the meaning of action human ' *human action*' (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994).

Ethnography is also approaching qualitative popular research that focuses on culture. Besides being very important in study anthropology, then ethnography is also appropriate for research How somebody define wealth and achieve wealth in accordance with each person's view.

(According to Spradley, 1980, Atkinson 1992, Wolcott 1997) "ethnography is explanation about culture with Meaning For study and understand about life individual. Ethnography means Study from people, who explain in a way direct from culture and subculture individual the".

Wolcott (1977) explains "ethnography is something method special or a set of methods in which there is various form that has characteristics certain, including participation ethnographer, understand and follow life daily from somebody in long period, seeing what happened, listen what was said, asked to they, and in fact collect what data only that which exists".

Ethnography is activity research that must be done through natural approach. Researchers must adopt respectful behavior or appreciate the social world.

There are two the basis that can used in collecting ethnographic data that is *interpretivism* and *interactionism*.

Interpretivism, introduced around 1930-1940 as reaction to empirical logical and instrumental rational and as accompanying approach phenomenology. According to Schutz (1967) the approach This focus on knowledge general about various problem human beings. In addition, the approach interpretive phenomenology search and get to know self and social life group (Strathern, 1981).

Symbolic interactionism: Is an approach theoretical the second which according to Blumer, (1969) has three Meaning namely (1) a person react to direction objects and based on the meaning of object That to himself, (2) The meaning originate from results interaction for example communication, and (3) Meaning is constructed through an interpretive process.

Condition something study social is careful observation about behavior and interaction they. As is generally the case with qualitative research, then approach ethnography for 30 years final This answer questions about validity, context and purpose. Modern ethnography develops appropriate paradigm with approach classic that is with observation and interpretation. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) explain that ethnography aim for more produce knowledge rather than increasing practice clinic, but ethnography education more for increase practice.

There are three type ethnography:

1. Realist Ethnography which is view objective to something situation, where seen from corner third person perspective. (Creswell, 2012)
2. Ethnographic Case Study, analysis case in perspective culture, exploring more in question person, place and so on.

- Ethnography critical, involving participating researchers speak out or advocate voice group socio-cultural research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In research This used studies ethnography about perspectives of ethnic workers Java in chase and collect wealth. This study in a way qualitative describe method worker tribal Java This in reach or gather riches Good That protection wealth, growth and planning wealth. Research This done with interview to a number of respondents who are worker with ethnic group Javanese. The following is results the interviews we feature to in table:

Table 1: Respondent Data

No.	Age	Work	Sex	Status
1	51	Specialist Dentist, Hospital Head, Entrepreneur	Male	Married
2	48	BUMN Employee	Male	Married
3	56	Entrepreneur	Female	Married
4	47	Private Employee	Male	Married
5	30	Dentist	Female	Married
6	58	Entrepreneur	Female	Married
7	62	Entrepreneur	Male	Married

After the researcher do open coding and produce subcategories, then next researchers will perform axial coding with method connect between subcategories with existing categories classified previously. In this process, based on paradigm coding, researcher connect theories that have been studied related with subcategories to in category conceptual. This process will do in a way repeatedly until found existing relationships among them. The repetition process conducted by researchers do comparison between indicators, codes, categories draft so that can produce empirical new.

Table 1 Selective Coding Results

Responden	Coding	Frekuensi
R1	Have dedicated savings	1
R1	in the form of deposits, bonds, and securities	3
R1	in the form of precious metals because their value increases, the risk is limited, and they are easy to liquidate	2
R1	in the form of property because of the constant appreciation over a long period	2
R1	long-term because they are difficult to liquidate, so they can be used for other matters	1
R1	separate savings to enjoy the fruits of work beyond basic needs	3
R1	extra funds remaining after consumption, set aside for investment	1
R1	Percentage of daily consumption is proportional to what is invested	1
R1	Not knowing what needs will arise in the future	1
R1	Our physical abilities decline, income decreases	1
R1	Increasing needs are not commensurate with the decrease in income	1
R1	Ensuring the future	3
R1	Savings must be able to beat the rate of inflation growth	1

Responden	Coding	Frekuensi
R1	Freedom from financial worries	1
R2	Special savings are in a separate account	1
R2	For children's education funds, save in the form of precious metals and gold savings	1
R2	By setting aside a certain amount every month plus any bonuses or other income outside of salary	1
R2	Choose gold because it is inflation-resistant, its price tends to rise	1
R2	Meet future needs	1
R2	Have a life guarantee after retirement	1
R2	Regularly participate in zakat al-mal Sacrifice	1
R2	Set aside income for parents	1
R2	Have an emergency fund of at least 3 months' salary	1
R3	Special savings in a separate account	1
R3	By setting aside money every month plus any bonuses or other income outside of salary	1
R3	Invest for the future in the form of land, apartments, deposits	1
R3	In the form of property due to constant appreciation over a long period	1
R3	To meet family needs	1
R3	Want to make your family happy and be useful to many people	1
R3	Be happy physically and mentally	1
R3	Work hard and worship	1
R4	Have a special plot every month for tertiary needs	1
R4	Have savings	5
R4	Invest for the future in the form of land, apartments, deposits	1
R4	Accumulate more assets beyond basic needs	2
R4	Daily needs are met	2
R4	Set aside money to save for retirement	1
R4	Give charity	1
R4	Calculate the needs of the whole family	2
R4	Must be willing to work	1
R5	By setting aside money every month plus any bonuses or other income outside of salary	1
R5	Basic salary is used for daily needs	3
R5	In the form of precious metals because the value increases, the risk is limited, and it is easy to liquidate	1
R5	In the form of deposits	1
R5	To please the family	2
R5	For the future and for the future needs of children	3
R5	Can meet Needs	3
R5	Be grateful	1
R5	Work hard, save, and have a business	2
R6	Share income for tertiary needs	1
R6	Share income for children's education	1
R6	Investments for the future in the form of land, apartments, and deposits	1
R6	If you save gold, the resale value is not high	1
R6	It can be fun and beneficial for others	1
R6	You can educate your children well and become successful	1

Responden	Coding	Frekuensi
R6	Your daily needs are met	1
R6	A stable life	1
R6	Work hard and invest	1
R7	Have a special savings account	1
R7	Share income according to a certain percentage	3
R7	Investments for the future in the form of land, apartments, and deposits	1
R7	Property can generate income for your old age	4
R7	Almsgiving to create peace of mind	2
R7	There must be a balance between hard work and gratitude	1
R7	Use some of the incoming funds, save the rest for the future	3
R7	Work hard in your youth and enjoy your old age	1
R7	Don't disturb others in your life	1

Table 2 : Axial Coding Results

Investment Savings	Revenue Sharing	Future Life	Family Needs	Religious Needs	Happiness of People Around	Work and Strive	Subcategories
1							Having dedicated savings
3							in the form of deposits, bonds, and securities
2							in the form of precious metals because their value increases, the risk is limited, and they are easy to liquidate
2							in the form of property because of the constant appreciation over a long period
1							long-term because they are difficult to liquidate, so they can be used for other matters
3							Separate savings to enjoy the fruits of work beyond basic needs
1							Extra funds remaining after consumption, set aside for investment
1							Percentage of daily consumption is proportional to what is invested
		1					Not knowing what needs will arise in the future
		1					Our physical abilities decline, income decreases
			1				Increasing needs are not commensurate with the decrease in income
		3					Ensuring the future
		1					Savings must be able to beat the rate of inflation growth

Investment Savings	Revenue Sharing	Future Life	Family Needs	Religious Needs	Happiness of People Around	Work and Strive	Subcategories
		1					Freedom from financial worries
1							Special savings are in a separate account
1							For children's education funds, save in the form of precious metals and gold savings
	1						By setting aside a certain amount every month plus any bonuses or other income outside of salary
1							Choosing gold because it is inflation-resistant, its price tends to rise
		1					Meeting future needs
		1					Having a life security after retirement
				1			Regularly participating in zakat al-mal Sacrifice
					1		Set aside income for parents
1							Have an emergency fund of at least 3 months' salary
1							Special savings in a separate account
	1						By setting aside money every month, plus any bonuses or other income outside of salary
	3						Basic salary is used for daily needs
1							In the form of precious metals because their value increases, risk is limited, and they are easily liquidated
1							In the form of deposits
					2		To please the family
		3					For the future and for children's future needs
			3				To meet needs
				1			Be grateful
						2	Work hard, save, and have a business
	1						Divide income for tertiary needs
	1						Divide income for children's education
1							Invest for the future in the form of land, apartments, and deposits
1							If you save gold, the resale price is not high

Investment Savings	Revenue Sharing	Future Life	Family Needs	Religious Needs	Happiness of People Around	Work and Strive	Subcategories
					1		Can be fun and beneficial for others
			1				Can educate children well and become successful
			1				Daily needs are met
		1					Stable life
						1	Work hard and invest
1							Have special savings
	3						Income distribution is regulated by a certain percentage
1							Invest for the future in the form of land, apartments, and deposits
		4					Property can generate income for old age
				2			Almsgiving to create peace of mind
				1			There must be a balance between hard work and Be grateful
		3					Use only a portion of incoming funds, save the rest for the future
		1					Work hard when you're young, and enjoy your old age
						1	Don't disturb others in your life

next stage will be done researchers is classify coding open coding and coding axial (axial code) to in selective coding in which researchers find connection between every category and sub- categories dor produced become theme research. Research results identify three (3) themes consisting of from: Accumulation Wealth, Savings Wealth, and Planning Riches.

Table 4: Selective Coding Results

Categoric	Frequency	Themes	Total
Invests	18	Wealth Accumulation	30
Savings	12		
Revenue sharing	16	Wealth Savings	21
Work and effort	5		
Life in the future	22	Wealth Planning	46
Family needs	11		
Religious needs	7		
Happiness of people around	6		

CONCLUSION

This ethnographic study of Javanese employees' perspectives on pursuing wealth yields three main conclusions. First, the Javanese approach to wealth is organized around three core themes: wealth accumulation (saving, asset acquisition, debt avoidance), wealth preservation (emergency funds, insurance, family assistance), and wealth planning (children's education, retirement, religious obligations). These themes are not separate domains but interconnected elements of a coherent cultural financial logic. Second, Javanese cultural values fundamentally shape financial behavior: *nrimo* (acceptance) manifests in debt avoidance and contentment with sufficiency; *guyub* (togetherness) manifests in prioritizing family assistance alongside personal savings; and the integration of spiritual and worldly life manifests in including religious goals (hajj) in financial planning. Third, Javanese employees view wealth instrumentally as a means to achieve security for themselves, their families, and their spiritual obligations rather than as an end in itself or a measure of personal worth. This contrasts with the wealth maximization assumptions of conventional financial economics but aligns with broader Indonesian cultural values emphasizing balance, harmony, and collective welfare.

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