

Consumer Preferences and Opportunity Costs in Local Culture: A Microeconomic Analysis of Wangkar Walek Song Lyrics

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ABSTRACT

Regional songs not only hold aesthetic and cultural values, but also contain socio-economic reflections of the community. The song Wangkar Walek from Manggarai is one form of cultural expression that contains narratives about choices, sacrifices, and social relations in the context of romance. Within the framework of microeconomics, the story in this song can be understood as a real picture of how individuals make decisions in situations of limitations and complex social considerations. The lyrics show individual preferences that are not only based on material gains, but also on emotional and social values such as love, recognition and dignity. On the other hand, there are real opportunity costs when the characters in the song have to sacrifice other alternatives that may be more socially or economically beneficial. These choices cannot be separated from the strong influence of local culture, such as customary norms, social status, and family expectations that shape the economic framework of traditional society. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with content analysis techniques of Wangkar Walek song lyrics. Data were obtained from song texts as primary sources, as well as literature on microeconomics and Manggarai culture as secondary sources. The results show that consumer preferences and opportunity costs are not only present in the modern market space, but also in the social interactions of traditional communities recorded in cultural works. This research opens an integrative space between economic studies and local culture, and becomes a contextual approach in microeconomic education.

Keywords: *Local Song, Microeconomics, Preference, Opportunity Cost, Local Culture, Wangkar Walek, Traditional Community, Lyric Analysis, Decision Making, Social Value*

1. INTRODUCTION

Regional songs are often a reflection of the social, cultural and even economic values of the local community. One of the songs that represent the dynamics of life in Manggarai society is "Wangkar Walek". This song tells a story of sacrifice, choice, and social relations in the context of romance, which if analyzed more deeply, contains important aspects of microeconomics, especially related to individual preferences, decision making, and opportunity costs.

In the song "Wangkar Walek", the narrative of a person who has to give up his love for family and traditional considerations reflects a trade-off or sacrifice of other alternatives that may be personally preferable. This is in line with the concept of opportunity cost in microeconomics, which is the value of the best option that must be sacrificed when making a decision. In many traditional societies, including in Manggarai, matchmaking and marriage decisions are often not entirely determined by individual will, but rather by social norms, family expectations and cultural values. Classic research by [1] in the context of Javanese society shows that decision-making in traditional families does not only consider economic rationality, but is also influenced by the social structure that forms the "moral economy" of society.

It also reflects how consumer preferences in traditional societies are not individualized and value-free, but rather shaped by cultural structures and social relations. [2] findings show that consumption and preferences in traditional societies often reflect symbolic values, not merely utility values. In the context of the song "Wangkar Walek", the love relationship becomes an arena where

symbolic values such as obedience to family, self-respect, and honor are displayed through the act of letting go of a loved one. This shows that in a society like Manggarai, economic preferences are complex and often contradict the principles of individual rationality.

Research by [3] analyzing the lyrics of folk songs in South Sulawesi also revealed that traditional songs can be used as a source of ethnographic data to understand the social and economic dynamics of society. With a similar approach, the song "Wangkar Walek" can be used as a study material to see how the Manggarai people value wealth, love, and social relations in the framework of economic decision-making. Through this interdisciplinary approach, we not only enrich our understanding of microeconomics in a local context, but also preserve the cultural values that are lived and practiced by the community.

The formulation of the problems in this study include how consumer preferences are reflected in the lyrics of the song "Wangkar Walek", what are the forms of opportunity cost in the actions of the character or narrator in the song, and how the influence of local Manggarai culture on economic decision making in the context shown.

This research aims to analyze the representation of economic preferences and choices in the lyrics of the song "Wangkar Walek", identify the forms of opportunity cost that appear in the song's narrative, and examine the influence of local culture on individual economic choices as depicted in the lyrics.

The benefits of this research include theoretical aspects, namely as a contribution to the interdisciplinary literature between culture and microeconomics; practical aspects, namely providing a contextual and more relevant approach in learning microeconomics in the local environment; and cultural aspects, namely promoting and preserving Manggarai cultural values in the academic and scientific realm.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to [4], Project Based Learning is a learning model that uses projects or activities as a learning tool to achieve competency in attitudes, knowledge, and skills achieved by students. Meanwhile, [5] stated that Project Based Learning is a learning model that uses problems as the first step in collecting and integrating new knowledge based on real life experiences.

Microeconomic studies focus on individual behavior in making decisions on limited resources. Two key concepts in this regard are preferences and opportunity costs. Preference refers to an individual's tendency or choice of a good, service, or situation that is considered the most satisfying. Individuals are considered rational if they choose something that best suits their satisfaction. On the other hand, opportunity cost refers to the value of the best alternative that must be given up when choosing a particular course of action. These two concepts are very relevant to understand how people, including in a local cultural context such as Manggarai, make important decisions that are not only economic in the narrow sense, but also social and emotional. In that context, preferences and opportunity costs do not only measure material values, but also symbolic and moral values. As explained by [6], opportunity cost is one of the basic principles in understanding how individual choices are affected by scarcity and limitation.

However, in traditional societies, decision-making is not only based on the logic of utility or individual satisfaction, but is also influenced by cultural values, social norms and customary systems. The decision to marry, choose a partner or comply with family wishes is not just a personal matter, but is part of a binding social system. Culture becomes the framework that shapes

preferences, and limits or directs individual choices. As described by Berman and Coutts (2020), economics does not stand in a neutral space, but always operates within a framework of social values and institutions that shape and direct economic behavior. In Manggarai society, customary norms and family honor have a strong influence on decision-making, and this is reflected in various aspects of life, including romantic relationships as in the song "Wangkar Walek". In this context, symbolic values such as loyalty, social responsibility and reputation become part of the decision-making structure.

One approach to understanding the link between economy and culture is through analyzing traditional song lyrics, which function as cultural products as well as reflections of people's collective experiences. Folk songs not only convey aesthetic messages, but also hold social narratives that reveal dilemmas, conflicts, and economic values embraced by the community. A study by [7] shows that traditional song lyrics can be used as a data source to study the social and economic dynamics of local communities, because they contain symbols, metaphors and meanings that reflect the social structure of the community. The song "Wangkar Walek", which tells the story of a man who has to give up his girlfriend due to family pressure, is an example of how individual preferences can be compromised in favor of collective values, and how the opportunity cost in this case concerns not only the loss of a partner, but also personal feelings, hopes, and futures.

Thus, an interdisciplinary approach between microeconomics, cultural studies, and music analysis can provide a fuller understanding of people's economic behavior. Concepts such as preferences and opportunity costs become more meaningful when read in the context of local cultures that are rich in values and symbols. The song "Wangkar Walek" opens up a space for us to see that economic decisions never stand alone, but are always within a complex social, cultural and moral fabric.

3. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative-descriptive approach with a focus on text study and cultural interpretation. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand the meaning contained in song lyrics in depth, especially related to the representation of microeconomic concepts in the context of local culture. Through this approach, the research seeks to explore how economic values, such as preferences and opportunity costs, are articulated in narrative and symbolic forms in the lyrics of the song "Wangkar Walek".

The data sources in this research consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the lyrics of the song "Wangkar Walek" which will be the main object of analysis. Meanwhile, secondary data includes microeconomic literature, Manggarai cultural references, and previous research results relevant to the interdisciplinary theme between culture and economy. Both types of data are used complementarily to strengthen the interpretation and ensure the depth of analysis of the object of study.

The data analysis technique used is content analysis, which aims to systematically identify microeconomic representations in song lyrics. The analysis process involved coding the data into several key themes such as preference, sacrifice, rational choice, and cultural values. These themes were then analyzed to see how economic concepts are not only implicitly present in song lyrics, but also influenced and mediated by the social structure and cultural values living in Manggarai society.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Interpretation of Preferences in Lyrics

The lyrics of the song "Wangkar Walek" describe the main character who faces a dilemma between maintaining his true love or submitting to social and family pressures. In the context of

microeconomics, this dilemma reflects the battle between personal preferences and binding social realities. The choice faced by the character is not only about who to love, but also about the social, moral and even economic consequences of that choice. Preferences in economics are not just about financial gain, but also include non-material values such as love, pride and loyalty.

Individual preferences in traditional societies like Manggarai tend to be shaped by many external factors. Unlike the assumption in neoclassical economics that individuals have fixed preferences and are free from social influences, this song shows that preferences are dynamic, influenced by norms, social structures and cultural pressures. In the song, characters may emotionally prefer one partner, but are unable to realize their choice due to external considerations such as family disapproval or inequality of social status.

This preference conflict shows that individual choices in local culture cannot be separated from considerations of social identity and honor. When a songstress chooses to step down in order to maintain family dignity or to comply with the collective decision, her personal preference has been “defeated” by the larger value system. This indicates that economic preferences in Manggarai society contain symbolic and social dimensions, not just individual satisfaction in the material sense. The song lyrics also imply that the preferences taken by the characters are not expressed directly, but through narratives of sacrifice and regret. It can be seen that in Manggarai society, the expression of preferences is often conveyed through emotional and symbolic language, rather than through explicit declarations. This shows a striking difference with the rational model in Western economic theory that emphasizes explicit calculations and direct decision-making based on maximum benefits. Thus, the song “Wangkar Walek” teaches that preferences in microeconomics are not always individualistic and utilitarian. In societies with strong social values, preferences are shaped by a complex web of meanings and social relations. This means that an understanding of economic preferences must consider the cultural, emotional and relational context inherent in people's lives.

4.2 Identification of Opportunity Costs

In the song “Wangkar Walek”, the main character who fails to maintain his true love faces the harsh reality of losing something he desperately wants. From a microeconomic point of view, this situation reflects opportunity cost, which is the value of the best alternative sacrificed when one chooses another course of action. In this case, the opportunity cost is not just the loss of a partner, but also the loss of an emotional future and personal identity tied to the relationship.

The opportunity cost in these lyrics becomes even more complex when viewed in a social framework. Not only do the characters lose love, but they may also sacrifice long-term happiness in order to maintain family honor or follow customary rules. This indicates that in traditional societies, opportunity costs cannot be calculated in conventional economic terms, but also include symbolic and moral dimensions. The decision not to go against social norms also means sacrificing the courage to choose one's own path.

In addition, the song lyrics do not provide a definitive answer as to whether the character's choice is a rational or emotional decision. In an economic perspective, this shows that opportunity costs are not always fully realized by economic actors. Often, individuals only realize the disadvantages of their choices after the consequences are felt. This phenomenon is known as bounded rationality, where limited information, social pressure and emotional conditions affect an individual's capacity to make optimal choices.

Opportunity costs in “Wangkar Walek” are also closely related to the social structure and economic status of the family. When someone is not accepted due to low economic status or an unfulfilled dowry, there is an opportunity cost in the form of the loss of social relations that have been built. In the context of Manggarai society, social relations are an important form of capital that cannot be calculated with money alone, so sacrificing these relations has a deep economic meaning. Therefore, this song can be a reflective medium to understand how opportunity costs in traditional societies are very complex and go beyond the limitations of numbers and graphs. It is also a reminder that in many contexts, especially in indigenous communities, economic decisions always intersect

with considerations of values, relationships and morality. Opportunity costs are not just about goods or services, but also about hope, love and social recognition.

4.3 Local Culture as a Determinant of Choice

In Manggarai culture, economic decisions never stand alone, but are always influenced by binding cultural structures. The lyrics of the song "Wangkar Walek" show how aspects such as dowry (belis), family status, and customary norms become important considerations in romantic relationships. The choice to be with someone is not just a matter of personal compatibility, but must consider cultural compatibility, the blessing of the extended family, and economic readiness to fulfill traditional requirements. This shows that local culture is a major determinant in the structure of economic choices.

Dowry in the Manggarai tradition has both symbolic and functional meanings. It is not only a material gift, but also a marker of social status and commitment between families. When a man's family is unable to fulfill the dowry, the relationship can be broken off even though both parties love each other. In this case, customary structures direct preferences and determine the final outcome of a choice, while establishing a social hierarchy that strongly influences individual mobility.

Social norms in Manggarai society also play a big role in validating or rejecting a personal decision. Family or community disapproval can make a person have to sacrifice their choice for the sake of social harmony. This shows that in indigenous communities, economics is inseparable from ethical systems and social legitimacy. As explained by [2], economic actions in society are always embedded in social networks, not just free exchange relationships between individuals.

Personal economic choices, such as choosing a spouse, will always be weighed within a collective framework. In many cases, individuals do not have complete freedom in determining their fate, as such choices also impact the good name and honor of the family. Therefore, local culture not only influences the economic structure, but is also part of the incentive system that guides economic behavior in society.

Thus, local culture as reflected in the song "Wangkar Walek" cannot be separated from economic decision-making. It structures preferences, defines the boundaries of choice, and gives meaning to the actions that individuals take. Understanding culture as a framework in microeconomic analysis allows us to read more deeply into how traditional societies make choices that appear personal, but are actually very social.

4.4 Representation of Microeconomic Concepts in "Wangkar Walek" Song Lyrics

To clarify the findings in this study, especially the relationship between microeconomic concepts and the local cultural context reflected in the lyrics of the song "Wangkar Walek", it can be organized in the form of a thematic table. This table summarizes the representation of concepts such as preference, opportunity cost, and symbolic value as depicted in the song's narrative, as well as displaying the cultural meaning behind them in Manggarai society. The presentation in tabular format aims to make it easier for readers to understand the relationship between economic theory and the socio-cultural reality revealed through the song text.

Table 1. Representation of Microeconomic Concepts in Song Lyrics "Wangkar Walek"

Microeconomic Concept	Representation in the Lyrics	Contextual Meaning in Manggarai Culture
Preferences	The protagonist chooses true love but is forced to give it up due to social pressure	Preferences are not autonomous but shaped by customary values and family influence
Opportunity Cost	Sacrificing love to fulfill social norms and maintain social status	Losing the most emotionally valuable option in favor of social stability
Trade-off	Having to choose between personal love and family honor	Every decision involves sacrifices, both emotional and social

Symbolic Value	Letting go of a partner to protect the family's reputation	Love is replaced by the values of dignity and honor
Economic Embeddedness	The protagonist's choice is influenced by dowry requirements and family approval	Economic decisions are deeply embedded in customary structures and collective norms

CONCLUSION

The lyrics of the song Wangkar Walek imply the dynamics of economic choices rooted in limitations, sacrifices, and the pressure of social norms. The character's choice in the song is not only a matter of love, but also a complex economic decision, where individual preferences must deal with strong social values. In the context of microeconomics, this shows that preferences are not always rational in the conventional sense, but are shaped and limited by local cultural structures that live in society. Meanwhile, opportunity cost comes in the form of losing the best alternative, namely the relationship that is emotionally most desirable in order to follow social demands that are considered more acceptable collectively.

These findings show that the economic behavior of traditional communities cannot be analyzed partially with standard models that ignore social and cultural contexts. The lyrics of the song Wangkar Walek illustrate how economic, social and emotional considerations are integrated into the decision-making process. Loss is not only measured materially, but also symbolically and psychologically. In this case, cultural values such as honor, loyalty to family, and customary obligations, become important variables in understanding how people make their life choices.

This research also opens up space for new approaches to learning microeconomics, especially in the context of local education. Incorporating traditional song lyrics or cultural works as case studies can make economic concepts feel closer, contextual, and meaningful to learners. By understanding that economic theory can also be applied to analyze cultural phenomena, learners will be better able to connect local realities with scientific principles in a critical and reflective manner.

A broader and more in-depth follow-up study of other cultural works such as poems, folktales, traditional rituals or traditional performances is needed to uncover the economic values hidden in them. Such research not only enriches the interdisciplinary approach in economics and anthropology, but also contributes to the preservation of local culture in a more scientific and functional way. A song like Wangkar Walek is just one of many entry points to understanding how people make economic decisions that are integrated into their social lives.

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