

Karawo: Surviving the Industrial Revolution 4.0

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ABSTRACT

The inevitable technological advances in the fourth industrial revolution have both positive and negative impacts, and one of these negative impacts is shutting down of traditional industries, including the karawo (traditional embroidery) businesses. The arts of karawo will be nowhere to be found or become extinct if such small businesses keep terminating. This article describes how karawo arts survive in the era of the industry 4.0 and can meet the market needs. The research method used was qualitative descriptive analysis. This paper suggests that the arts of karawo will not be extinct or can survive in the era of the fourth industrial revolution and respond top to the demand of the society by (a) following the current tastes of users by utilizing one of the divisions of karawo physical functions, (b) creative economy, (c) taking advantage of digital-based business opportunities, (d) developing product designs, (e) creating time-effective designs in both the slicing-pulling process and in the process of stitching, and the process of combining.

Keywords — Survive, Karawo Arts, Industry 4.

1. INTRODUCTION

The world is currently facing the Industrial Revolution 4.0, a new buzzword for industries that produce goods and distribute services [1]. The inevitable technological advances are able to change various aspects of human life including the manufacturing industry. Negative and positive impacts are present in this era. The favorable impacts are in the form of connectivity and digitalization, which can improve the efficiency of the manufacturing chain and product quality. Meanwhile, the adverse ones include the shutting down of businesses in traditional industries as humans are replaced by machines and robots.

In the Industrial Revolution 4.0, the anxiety over possible threats to traditional works of arts in each region in Indonesia. To overcome this negative impact, Indonesia has developed five regionally-competitive manufacturing sectors: (1) food and beverage, (2) textiles and clothing, (3) automotive, (4) chemical, and (5) electronics [2]. One of the traditional works found in each region in Indonesia is textiles and clothing, including Karawo, traditional works of art from the Province of Gorontalo.

Karawo is a traditional embroidery craft that has a high aesthetic value, as seen from their motifs and colors. According to Sudana Karawo is a technique to bring out ornaments on intact cloth by means of slicing, pulling, and embroidering, all are done by hand [3]. Another opinion says that karawo is generally applied to decorate certain parts of clothing to create harmony for the wearer, so it looks more beautiful and attractive [4]. In line with this, Hasdiana argued that Karawo is one of the rekalar techniques, which is a way to decorate fabrics with a variety of beautiful motifs that attract the attention of buyers and users [5].

Karawo may have appeared before 1970 as an art object aimed at evoking a sense of beauty. There are two factors that support the growth and development of karawo, namely internal factors and external factors. The internal factors are

the craftsmen’s creativity and aesthetic taste while the external ones include the cross stitches brought by Dutch women when following their husbands working in Gorontalo during the colonial era, the customs of Gorontalo society, and the formal educational institutions such as Sekolah Kepandaian Putri (Secondary School for Domestic Sciences) that included karawo as a subject [6].

During the inauguration of Gorontalo as the 32nd province in Indonesia on 22 December 2000 (Law number 38 of 2000), Gorontalo used karawo to fulfill one of the technical requirements for the formation of a province. The new government issued a regional regulation requiring civil servants in the region to wear karawo on certain days as a symbol of the province. With the regional regulation, the manufacture of karawo started to follow demands from the market and groups of craftsmen with new motives emerged.

In 2006, karawo was confirmed as an original work of the Gorontalo Province, with the issuance of the Patent Right Certificate no. ID 00122784 about karawo embroidery as a handicraft owned by the Gorontalo people by the Indonesian Ministry of Law and Human Rights on 20 January 2006 [5]. At this time, new motifs emerged from karawo portraying the local culture of Gorontalo, similar to the pahangga motif made by Jhon Korag. The motif is meaningful because it is inspired by one of Gorontalo cultures. In addition to the pahangga motif, there is a corn motif, reflecting Gorontalo’s primary agricultural commodity.



Figure 1 Pahangga Motif

In 2011, with the initiation of the karawo festival by the government which received support from the Bank of Indonesia in Gorontalo, and by following a variety of events, karawo won an award as the most difficult and unique embroidery in the archipelago in the Nusantara Embroidery Festival at the Jakarta Elephant Museum [7], and in 2017, karawo was exhibited in the prestigious event, New York Fashion Week, brought by designer Agus Lahinta.

As karawo is becoming more important, it now has the physical function as a craft. Three functions can be identified: accessories, household linen, and clothing. Accessories in the form of items such as bags, headscarves, brooches, and fans. Household items include things such as food cover, bed linen, table cloth, and handkerchief while clothing encompasses men's clothing, women's clothing, and children's clothing. Women's clothing is further divided into party clothing, fashion clothing, carnival clothing and work clothing.

As contained in the E.B. Feldman's theory in *Art As Image and Idea*, art has three functions, namely social, personal, and physical. The social function is related to and has an interest in ideology and politics in contrast to the personal function that places art as a psychological expression, as an expression of love, sex, death, and concerns, and as an aesthetic expression. Meanwhile, physical function gives an association of art which is also charged to human functions and needs for physical living activities, such as buildings, monuments, architecture, handicraft items, and industry [8].

Karawo used on various kinds of products in accordance with its physical functions, which aims to beautify the product, is still made manually which takes a long time. Therefore, this paper aims to reveal how karawo can survive in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. by using the opportunities that exist in the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

2. METHOD

This research used a qualitative method, with the work of karawo as the research subject and the way karawo survive in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 as the object. The data were collected using observations, interviews, literature review, and documentations. The stages for analyzing the data include data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions and verification.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The making of karawo follows several stages: designing the motif, cutting and pulling the fiber yarn, embroidering, and rawang. In the karawo development process, the researcher focused more on the design of the motif of the karawo because the techniques used in the were still done manually.

There have been many important developments of karawo motif. Mahmud said that the development can be interpreted as a systematic, progressive, and continuous change [9]. This is in line with Sudana's argument that the concept of development includes two things, namely the modification of the existing entities that replaces the old ones and results in the introduction of new things [10]. From this view, what is meant by the development of the Karawo motif is that there is a continual change in the Karawo motif and a

change that results in a new Karawo motif, with the old motif still being produced.

The first stage in making karawo is to design motifs. The making of motif design on karawo is the result of an aesthetic value expression, where the expression is to get the attention of the people by showing a particular pattern order, or regularity. As an aesthetic value, order applied to an object aims to attract the people's attention. Regularity on the karawo motif tends to be mimesis. Mimesis is an imitation of something. In general, humans like something similar to something else. Mimesis on karawo is processed into a particular motif.



Figure 2 Karawo Motif

The making of karawo motifs is carried out by arranging straight lines on the grid so that it has a pixel-like shape. In general, the motifs can be classified into geometric, plant, and animal motifs. Then, the second step is slicing the yarn in accordance with the design of the motif used, to make the fabric formed like a grid or thick gauze fabrics. The third stage is to embroider it following the shape of the flower in the design of the motif, and the fourth is the process of merawang, that is, to bind the yarn that is not embroidered.

Meanwhile, the coloring process of the karawo is done by applying contrasting colors to differentiate between the fabric color and the karawo motif. However, the application of the contrasting color is very dynamic on the karawo.



Figure 3 Karawo Embroidery

Looking at the advantages of the karawo, it can be argued that it can survive the Industrial Revolution 4.0 particularly by making use of the opportunities that this era has to offer.

3.1 Following the Changing Taste of the Era

The era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 follows the tastes of the times with mass customization, which can be done by karawo using its physical functions, and making new motifs so that karawo can adjust or combine with today's popular art.

3.2 Creative Economy

Small and medium-sized enterprises (UMKM) can rationalize actions, increase competitiveness and capture opportunities in the present, where production becomes more flexible with the help of technology in designing the motives of karawo. It also increases the speed of production by using materials that have larger fabric fibers, such as canvas and using smaller-sized motif designs. In addition, it also utilizes digital-based business opportunities so that karawo products can be known by the wider community and closer to customers.

3.3 Developing Motif Design and Product

The development of motif design is done by looking at the coloring and making of the motifs that are affected by the grid so that simplification of shapes occurs. The design motifs can be made into pop art, and developed into new products such as wall hangings, book covers, and light stamps.

3.3.1 Making the Design That Can Reduce Production Time

We can do a number of strategies to minimize design time, such as by reducing the design of the motif and repeating the shape of the motif. Thus, cutting and removing yarn fibers will not require a long time.

4. CONCLUSION

Karawo has some advantages that make it able to survive in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, provided that it can take advantage of the opportunities offered in this era. These advantages include the physical function of karawo, the provision of color in a block with the use of contrasting colors, and the making of motifs that are influenced by the grid so that there is a simplification of the form to follow the contemporary art with pop art motifs. Karawo can survive the Industrial Revolution 4.0 by: (a) following the tastes of the era, (b) developing a creative economy, (c) utilizing digital-based business opportunities, (d) developing product designs, and (e) creating designs that can reduce the time of manufacturing.

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