Continuity of Traditional Ceramic Arts in The Socio-cultural Context of Crafters Society

Irfan
Art and Design Faculty
Universitas Negeri Makassar
Makassar, Indonesia
irfanridh@student.unm.ac.id

SP. Gustami
Department of Visual Art/Visual Art and Design
Indonesian Institute of the Arts Surakarta
Surakarta, Indonesia
eyangdharso@gmail.com

Guntur
Department of Visual Art/Visual Art and Design
Indonesian Institute of the Arts Surakarta
Surakarta, Indonesia
gunturisi@yahoo.co.id

Abstract—Traditional ceramic art in various regions of Indonesia has existed for hundred years, but its form and function still remain sustainable in the modern era, it is allegedly influenced by various socio-cultural elements of crafters who have a pattern of inheritance continuing to their next generations, in addition, it is also supported by geographic and demographic conditions. The purpose of this research is to explain the socio-cultural elements of traditional ceramic crafters society in Takalar Regency South Sulawesi Province Indonesia that support the continuity of making traditional ceramic art. A qualitative research method in the form of observation, interview, and literature study. Data analysis uses an interactive model with a flow system. The results show that various socio-cultural elements such as natural environment, history, demography and gender, education, belief system, and economy are the main support of the continuity of traditional ceramic art in Takalar Regency. Traditional ceramic craft art also as local cultural product serves as cooking utensils and ritual necessity keeps its continuity in the society.

Keywords—sustainability, traditional ceramic craft art, socio-cultural, crafters

I. INTRODUCTION

Ceramic is one of the oldest craft art products, created thousand years ago by the Egyptians on the banks of the Nile. The early theory of the ceramic discovery is, ’cart theory,’ in prehistoric times; the wicker baskets used to store food. In order not to leak, the basket is coated with clay on the inside. Once unused the basket was burned, but the clay became hard. This theory is associated with the discovery of prehistoric ceramics, shapes and ornamental motifs on the outside of the relief basket [1]. Ceramic is the art of clay craft such as a cooking pot or earthen cooking pot, using a clay base material that is formed and then becomes hard after being burned at a temperature of 500°C to 1200°C. In a foreign language known as terracotta, earthenware, and ceramic [2]. Ceramics derived from the Greek "Keramos" meaning, cooking pot or earthen cooking pot, made of soil or silicate material and the process of making it through combustion [3].

The using of ceramics as a living tool has been going on for thousand years. The archaeological findings show that ancient ceramics were found in the Middle East 4000 years ago, by then, ceramic trade has grown so rapidly [4].

Ceramic art has been regarded as a cultural artifact and one of the oldest craft arts that has an important role in human life. Ceramics in the past are generally used as household appliances, building elements, food containers, home decoration, body jewelry, money-saving tools, tools for making metal objects, lighting equipment and various other functions [5]. Ceramics as a cultural product is the embodiment of ideas, technology, values, and norms adopted by certain communities. Each region has a unique ceramic shape and different from other areas, both from the aspects of manufacturing techniques, styles and their trademarks [6]. Characteristic of ceramic form each region is a local cultural asset that needs to be preserved and developed, both aesthetic value and economic value, in order to further increase the income of craftsmen and buyer satisfaction.

The term of ceramic is wider than the word pottery, but has the same substance, because the pottery is part of the ceramic. Some opinions assume that pottery products are limited to past ceramic products as cooking utensils. Pottery (Java) is kitchen utensils (for cooking), made from clay, then burned [7]. Pottery is also interpreted as a product that refers to objects which made from clay with the pattern of cultivating past traditions that are static over long periods of time [8]. There are different pottery opinions of ceramics because ceramics are glassware objects that surface smooth and shiny like porcelain in the form of vases, jars, floor tiles, and others, while pottery is the stuff of clay in the form like cooking pots, earthen cooking pots, waterpots [9].

If traced historically, the emergence of traditional ceramics in the district of Takalar South Sulawesi is also associated with the existence of traditional ceramics in other areas in the archipelago. People have felt the benefits of traditional ceramic objects since they began to recognize the life of farming about 10,000 years ago [10]. Ceramic objects have existed in various parts of the world, in Egypt, Greece, Asia and also in Indonesia. To find out further from which part in the world this art of ceramics first emerged, it required specific research. However, for ceramic art in Takalar, tracking can be done on ceramic forms that have existed in the archipelago since several centuries ago.

The development of the archipelago classical era shows the development of various ceramic products the classical period is the emergence of the center of Hindu-Buddhist...
civilization in the archipelago that allows the archipelago to connect with other civilization centers in Southeast Asia [10]. At this time people and the center of the kingdom have been using a lot of traditional ceramics, such as the reliefs of Majapahit in TrowulanMojokerto East Java. Various forms of ceramics from Trowulan have similarities with ceramics from Takalar such as gumbang, uring-uring, and katoang.

The beginning emergence of ceramics in South Sulawesi can be thought that the ceramics got influence from Java since the 14th century Makassar port has been visited by many traders from Java and Malay. The Port of Makassar began to increase as an international trading center with the eastern islands. With the fall of the Portuguese in 1511, indigenous and foreign traders including large numbers of Malay and Javanese as well as Chinese, European, Arabic, and Indians quickly switched to ports along the north coast of Java and the south-west coast of South Sulawesi [11].

Since the 16th century, the port of Makassar has become a haven for merchants from outside the region under the royal power of the Gowa and Tallo Kingdom. Various merchandises such as ceramic art from China, has become a collection of the royal family from the kingdom of Sulawesi, as well as ceramic craft for cooking utensils has been known by the people of South Sulawesi, even the manufacture of ceramic art has been done in some areas such as in Takalar, Luwu, and Gowa.

In the past, most residents of Sandi village in Pattallassang and Pabatangan and Pakalli villages in Mappakasunggu sub-district worked as traditional ceramic craftsmen for cooking purposes. Craftsmen form a small group of 5-10 people to fill orders and traditional markets and collectors that usually transported by boat. Viewed from the number of ceramic transporters, from 1970 to 1990 there were about 20-24 biseang (boats) specializing in ceramics to Raha and Kalimantan, from 2000 to 2010 began to decline, by 2014 the remaining 4 boats (Pace, interview, 12-6-2015). The four boats that operate today mostly carry traditional ceramics for cooking utensils, most of which are uring-uring from Pakalli Sanrobone subdistrict.

This research is conducted to trace the continuity of art of ceramic craft in Takalar Regency in the socio-cultural perspective of society. Thus can be identified the main elements that support continuity, after that can become a reflection of the socio-cultural conditions of the craftsmen. The tradition of ceramic making in Takalar was originally born from women to help the family economy and help husbands who work as farmers. At that time, all craftsmen in Takalar only made ceramics for cooking utensils known as earthen cooking pots, and we can think that the ceramics got influence from Java.

III. RESULT

Ceramics are products which born from the craft man community, in response to the environment, economic demands, the need for home appliances, and the demand from the buyers. Ceramic as an artifact is one form of human works culture; ceramic is also a physical culture in the real form and as the work of society [14]. As a result of the crafter’s work, the art of ceramic crafts is made to meet the human needs of living equipment, such as cooking utensils, wall displays, vases, and ornaments. Moreover, as an artifact, ceramics have a technical asset and non-technical assets. The non-technical assets of artifacts include two factors, namely hidden factors and motivation. Hidden factors include taste, desire, emotion, trust, value, and social culture. Motivation includes self-expression, endurance, economic, cultural, social, political, and ecological environment [15].

The non-technical asset is integrated into the visual form of ceramic art. Therefore, the different forms of ceramic artwork also reflect the differences of non-technical values contained therein. If the art of ceramic handicraft is still maintained by the crafters, then it is because people still need the products, it also shows that non-technical values are still considered relevant to the socio-cultural conditions of the community. The sustainability of ceramic crafts in Takalar is a reflection of the socio-cultural conditions of the craftmen who still inherit the technical skills of ceramic making, and at the same time provide an overview of the non-technical values required by the ceramic art user community in Takalar and surrounding areas.

A. Women as Crafters

The tradition of ceramic making in Takalar was originally born from women to help the family economy and help husbands who work as farmers. At that time, all craftsmen in Takalar only made ceramics for cooking utensils known as earthen cooking pots, and were limited for their own needs, but the number of traditional market demand increased that caused some locations to grow into ceramic handicraft centers, although all business groups were still in the business category small household or called home industry. However, craftsmen feel the income from making ceramics is very helpful to meet the daily needs.

The women’s role as ceramic crafters is very important because the majority of craftmen who form ceramic cores are women. It has been going on since before 1980 until today. Demographically, the population of Takalar Regency is mostly women, including in three research areas (Sandi, Pabatangan, and Pakalli village). The number of residents in Pattallassang Subdistrict is 37,222 consists of 17,648 men and women 19,547, while the population in Mappakasunggu Sub-district is 15,758, consisting of 7,437 men, and women 8,321. The population of Sanrobone Sub-district is 13,766, consisting of 6,474 men, and women, 7,292 [16].

From the data, it seems that the population in those locations are mostly women that became one of the supporting indicators of the existence of ceramic craft art which was created by women. The majority of crafters are women, while men become supporting crafters. The core crafters are people who can form the art of ceramic handicraft and master the whole processes of ceramic production, while the supporting crafters generally only help at a certain stage of the course. Moreover, women are the
core crafters, because they do all the processes of forming to finishing. Among the more than 900 crafters in Takalar which scattered in three sub-districts, only 5 craftsmen who can form the ceramic. For women as crafters, almost all stages of ceramic making process can be done, ranging from land acquisition, soil processing, forming, drying, burning, until the finishing stage. In production techniques, men, in general, can help all the stages, except the stages of formation, both the formation of the paddle-anvil technique and rotary techniques, especially for the art of traditional ceramic crafts for cooking purposes.

Fig. 1. Figure 1. Collection of photographs of women crafters in Takalar District (Pict: Irfan, 2014)

The existence of female crafters in Takalar, in line with the view that the continuity of ceramics in the archipelago is supported by the philosophy and belief that clay comes from the earth which is a symbol of women and fertility. In order for the fertility of the soil to remain immortal, God gave the women the authority to make clay goods, including the storage of rice and corn in the hope that the harvest will be more abundant [9]. This opinion is also in line with the results of Vincentelli’s research, a researcher on gender and ceramics, who has been researching almost all the continents of the world, mentions that in the Eastern tradition four of the five ceramic craftsmen are women [17].

The existence of women as craftsmen became the main support of the continuity and preservation of ceramic art. Women have inherited the skills of cultivating the soil, forming with a system of staring at the anvil, as well as ceramic production techniques, especially for cooking utensils. Although most women crafters prefer to make the old way process than to make by using new technology. However, the role of women crafters is very strategic in maintaining the continuity of ceramics, especially in the inheritance of manufacturing techniques, as well as preserving the ceramics as a collective habit of society and the family of crafters. On the other hand, the traditional making pattern that has been cultivated for decades and has become a habit and everyday activities, making ceramic crafters for cooking utensils is difficult adapting to changes in technology and new designs. It is seen when Industry and Trade Office (Disperindag) introduces ceramic chairs to be remade in Sandi village, in general, craftsters take one to two years to be able to make ceramic chairs as exemplified. For the jugs maker, it only takes one year to adapt, because it has been skillfully formed by rotary technique. But for ceramic crafters for cooking utensils takes about two years, because they have been accustomed to the technique of paddle-anvil.

Fig. 2. (a) Ceramic chairs in Sandi village; (b) Gumbang in Pabatangan village; (c) Uring-uring in Pakalli village (Pict: Irfan, 2014)

B. Economic Aspects

Viewed from the economic aspect, the economic system that takes place in the community of farmers, as well as ceramic crafters, tends to be still traditional. This system forms a cycle of interdependence between one another. Crafters need other people who can transport the soil and straw fuels to their homes, so there are some people who work as a conveyor. Crafters can not collect ceramic fuel themselves, so the emergence of a fuel builder then sell it to the crafters [18]. In addition, crafters need collectors to sell their ceramics; on the contrary, collectors need craft makers who can be a source of products to trade.

As a tenant farmer, crafters generally work on other people’s rice fields with a system for two outcomes. Owners need people who can work the fields and crafters need side jobs in addition to making ceramics. Therefore, making ceramics mostly from housewives, the men usually still work as farmers in the fields, especially in the rainy season. The phenomenon is still known as the traditional economic system.

Internally, the ability of crafters in Takalar to manage their business is still limited to traditional management patterns. The pioneered business involves almost all family members, and production is done at home and in the neighborhood. A form of business management that is still household-based. It seems that the crafters are satisfied with the conditions and ways of business. Therefore, there has been no effort and planned to develop the business more broadly and progressively. The condition is almost experienced by all craftsmen in Takalar district.

Moreover, in a traditional economic system known as the character of an autarchy or a closed economic system, it adequately meets the needs of a limited society to survive and meet common needs as a community. In the traditional economic system to maintain the existing level of prosperity is sufficient. Therefore there is no strong motivation to accumulate more property than necessary according to custom [19].
With regard to economic levels, a number of experts have attempted to establish levels of economic and industrial development. Rostow for example, establishes 5 levels of economic growth: 1) the traditional level; 2) requirements for take-off; 3) take off; 4) encouragement to maturity, and 5) mass consumption levels. The traditional level is characterized by limited productivity potential. Science, technology, and attitude prevailing in society all serve to deliver to the peak of development. Agricultural activities stand out, but their productivity is low. The available capital is small, the number of people saving a little, the number of people who are illiterate a lot [20].

According to Mahroni, the development and improvement of good marketing results can improve the level of the craftsmen economy [21]. In addition, the needs of supporting tools used by craftsmen always evolve with the changing mindset and technology supported by the attitude of life and mentality of the society [22]. The use of transportation tools such as pick-ups or trucks and motorcycles or bicycles to market the ceramic seats directly from Sandi is a step forward that helps increase the productivity of craftsmen. On the other hand, there is competition between craftsmen groups to produce ceramic seats in bulk with more emphasis on the quantity of quality.

The craftsmen group in Sandi hamlet who made the jars and chairs has the ability to market more advanced than the group of craftsmen in Pakalli Sanrobone and Pa’batanganMappakasunggu. Crafters from Sandi have tried various marketing systems to sell their products, for example, deliver and offer their products directly to people’s homes. While craftsmen in Pa’anganangan and Pakalli tend to be more static because just waiting for buyers who come to take order products. Even craftsmen prefer the order of the collectors who have paid the first product ordered.

In terms of market demand, the presence of ceramics is generally more likely to see the aspect of market demand in determining what products will be made. Since 2001 most of the artisans in Sandi hamlet have turned to ceramic chair craftsmen. This is due to ceramic chairs more market demand than other types of ceramics. The craftsmen make chairs and tables from Sandi village rely more on speed and quantity, every day, hunters hunt with time to manually produce seats. The existence of a certain number of targets to be achieved in a short time makes craftsmen ignore details and quality. Finally, the seats produced have a shape with less precise precision, so the price is low. This makes most seats purchased by the lower and middle economic community. Production technology of ceramic chairs in general, still using a rotary tool, but actually can be developed with printing systems using gypsum materials.

In terms of availability of raw materials, in general still many available in the vicinity of the artisans residence. To obtain raw materials, craftsmen must prepare transportation costs to transport from the location of the land to their homes. The type of clay used is clay type alluvial gray, but after burning turns reddish brown. The soil processing technique is a dry technique; the soil is taken in a dry state and accommodated in the column of the house also in a dry state. After the soil will be used newly soaked with water on the pool made with the width and depth as needed.

Types of clay to make ceramics vary, such as: kaolin, ball clay, ground fire, stoneware ground, and red brick ground. The soil type in Takalar regency is the type of red brick (ceramic / earthenware) that is secondary soil type, medium grained, and plastic, but some are rather fragile because it contains a lot of sand. According to Ambar Astuti, the raw color is red, brown, greenish, or gray, while the color is yellow, orange, red, brown to black, depending on the fuel temperature and the amount of iron oxide; This clay is commonly used for brick buildings, stoneware, and other rough ceramics. This material is hard to burn solid if not mixed with other ingredients. The burning temperature is less than 1000 °C [3].

One of the interesting phenomena in ceramic small business is that the industry is a local asset with cheap capital because it only uses local raw materials, but the selling price is relatively cheaper and produced by hand skill, so it is not directly in mass [18]. Soil raw materials that are still widely available in the environment, as well as the provision of skills that craftsmen make ceramic art business can survive in various national economic conditions. This is in line with Saleh's suggestion that the handicraft and household industries in Indonesia are local skills of small capital which mostly use raw materials from the nearest environment with relatively low selling prices and not mass-produced [24].
Making ceramics for craftsmen in Takalar is already a hereditary heritage, the skills gained through the inheritance system of the families are part of the livelihood system. Several groups of ceramic chairs gained in Sandhi have made ceramic work as the main job, in Pakalli and Pabatangan, dozens of groups of craftsmen from urung-urung entirely of women have made the manufacture of urung-urung and gumbang as daily work.

From the aspect of trust, people in Takalar district and surrounding areas believe that the newborn's birth plane is the sibling of the baby, so the baby's plates should be buried in the soil properly, to do so, first to be put in the urung which made from the soil, and then covered and buried in the ground not far from the house, usually under the tree. In addition, the use paddapan of clay is also always present in every ceremony of thanksgiving, maidul, entering the house, songkabala, barasanji, and various other life rituals.

IV. DISCUSSION

Ceramic handicraft art is a product born from the crafter's community as an adaptation to the surrounding environment and as a strategy to survive in the conditions of agricultural culture. Women are the core craftsmen of ceramic art crafts, very less than men who can form ceramics; this is due to the tradition of making ceramics born from women, passed down through generations through the family by the women. Most craft women are poorly educated, and many do not graduate from formal education but acquire the skills of making ceramic art naturally or non-formally, through seeing, making and familiarizing through their respective family groups. The weakness is the pattern of family-based education does not teach creativity and innovation, so that the form and function of ceramic art that made not yet much progress and development. Seen from the geographical aspect, the crafter's condition of geographical environment provides the abundant alluvial soil material so that it becomes the raw material for the manufacture of ceramics, besides, the condition of the land that can only be cultivated once a year in the rainy season, so that makes the farmers have plenty of time to make ceramics during the dry season. The economic factor is the main thrust of crafters making ceramics, from the result of selling ceramics they can meet their daily living needs in a simple way because the price of ceramic art is very low, but many of them feel happy and satisfied.

The continuity of ceramic craft art can be specifically seen from the six components: (1) The market demand for ceramic art goods still has a clear market of the weak economy people who prefer using clay goods as daily containers which of course differs from plastics that practical but containing chemical substances and can be a waste that pollutes the environment; (2) The availability of raw materials in the environment around the crafters in the form of millions of cubic meters of land that can be obtained easily and for free; (3) There is plenty of time to make ceramics and become a permanent work of crafters; (4) knowledge and skills acquired from generation to generation naturally through custom; (5) The economic rewards may be sufficient for the daily needs of the crafter's family; and (6) The role of art objects supports the existing belief system in society.

V. CONCLUSION

The existence of traditional ceramic handicraft art will remain sustainable in traditional village society; the socio-cultural element is the main supporting of the continuity. In some aspects of socio-cultural values of agrarian society has advantages, because it still uses household appliances from ceramic material as a product of nature that can easily reunite with nature without causing environmental pollution. These values should be preserved as local wisdom from rural communities living in traditional and simple ways. However, these traditional values have not provided the space for innovation and creativity to develop ceramic art products to be more artistic. Therefore, external intervention is needed to further develop ceramic art products to be more competitive and have added value.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This paper is part of the dissertation research results; therefore, through this opportunity, the author would like to thank you very much; 1) Director General of Higher Education, Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (Ristekdikti) for BPPDN scholarships; 2) Prof. Dr. Husain Syam, M.TP. as the Rector of Universitas Negeri Makassar who has granted the permission to study to the S-3 level; 3) Rector of the Indonesian Institute of Art Surakarta has accepted the author to study S-3; 4) To all resource persons, as well as all parties who have not been mentioned one by one. Thank you infinity, may Allah SWT always respond with His blessings.

REFERENCES


