



KUDUS EMBROIDERY ARTWORK AS A FORM OF LOCAL CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the artwork of Kudus embroidery as a form of local cultural heritage in the midst of rapid global modernization. Rapid global modernization. This type of research is qualitative with a narrative approach. Embroidery Itself is an art of decorating fabrics that has developed from traditional to Modern, and has an important role in Indonesian fashion and culture. Kudus Embroidery, with its local wisdom-based characteristics, sometimes faces challenges such as Lack of innovation, limited capital, and increasingly fierce global competition. For this reason, this research is presented in narrative form to describe or tell the story of the inheritance of Kudus embroidery art, about the inheritance of Embroidery artwork. From the research results, it was found that Reflects a rich local cultural identity with a long history since before independence and since before independence and developed rapidly since the 1970s. Supported by the Entrepreneurial spirit of the people of Kudus, known by the motto "Gusjigang," the art of embroidery became one of the results of industrialization that strengthened the local economy and culture. That strengthens the local economy and culture. Kudus embroidery is famous for its techniques and distinctive motifs, such as local flora, which makes it a flagship nationally and internationally world, both nationally and globally. However, globalization and the low interest of the younger generation are the main challenges in its preservation. Efforts such as promotion through social media, participation in exhibitions, and government support have helped Kudus Embroidery, especially through Boutique Dahlia, to exist. Dahlia Boutique to continue to exist and develop as a heritage.

Keywords: *Holy Embroidery, local wisdom, local cultural inheritance, works of art.*

INTRODUCTION

Embroidery is anything that changes the shape of fabric using various embroidery stitches and various forms of decorative motifs made with the help of a

machine. (Susiani & Ernawati, 2019). Another opinion states that embroidery is a way of changing the surface of a fabric without using hands in the manufacturing process, but instead using a machine to obtain a more beautiful and plentiful

product. (Ramadhani & Nelmira, 2023) In its development, embroidery has a very important role in the world of fashion, both traditional and modern fashion. Indonesia is a country rich in culture. Culture is everything that is created, done, and recognized by a group of people in terms of art, beliefs, knowledge, customs, and habits. Cultural indicators include ideas, concepts, values, behavior, and human creations. Every human being must have and do a culture because culture is born and develops in human life. (Sumarto, 2019). The wealth of natural resources and the vastness of Indonesia's territory have resulted in many cultures spread across various regions. Local communities continue to explore, develop, and preserve the rich culture in Indonesia, which is often used by the community to become a source of driving the creative industry because it has the opportunity and potential to improve the welfare of the surrounding community. (Darusman, 2019)

(I. Purbasari & Fajrie N, 2020) stated that the culture that has been applied in the family gives rise to interactions in the community environment to develop local icons that have an impact on village progress; this can be seen in the creativity of Embroidery designs, one of which is an important factor that can affect the selling price. This has become a characteristic of Kudus embroidery design. Therefore, one of the things that must be done is to create Embroidery designs based on local wisdom. Previous research found that one of the strengths of the Kudus embroidery industry is the market share dominated by the Muslim community. On the other hand, the study found that the lack of creativity in Embroidery product design, which tends to be monotonous, and a business climate that is not entirely favourable are weaknesses of the industry. However, Embroidery design also affects the selling price of embroidery, which has an impact on the income of Embroidery artisans (Sadah et al., 2020).

The art of embroidery has evolved from generation to generation and is

passed down as a characteristic of embroidery design. Society continues to change it, producing new, creative and innovative designs. However, what is happening now is that this concept has been passed down from generation to generation and is no longer used because many young people do not want to learn how to make this embroidery. In addition, the motifs used are less innovative, and many still rely on motifs that have been used for a long time (Jannah, 2024).

Embroidery nowadays follows the fashion trend, this means that Embroidery is no longer a closed and traditional skill, but Embroidery is already known in society both nationally and internationally. Embroidery is the main accent in fashion, so Embroidery skills are currently in great demand. The embroidery itself is not only applied in a traditional kebaya but can be applied in various clothing such as clothes, household equipment and so on. Indonesia is a country that has many traditional crafts/skills, one of which is Embroidery. Embroidery is one of the techniques for decorating fabrics that is done by hand or by a sewing machine or Embroidery machine. However, along with the development of the era, embroidery techniques can use computers. Embroidery is one of the decorative crafts (for various clothing accessories) that emphasizes the beauty and composition of thread colours on numerous fabrics with the help of a set of sewing machines (Embroidery sewing machines) or computer embroidery sewing machines. Embroidery or embroidery is a decoration made on cloth or other materials with sewing needles and threads. In addition to thread, decorations for embroidery or Embroidery can use materials such as metal pieces, pearls, beads, bird feathers, and sequins.

Embroidery initially developed from straight stitches, like stitches on fabrics that were created for beauty or decoration. When Embroidery first appeared, Embroidery was included in luxury goods and could only be owned by certain people. At that time, Embroidery

decorations were combined with gold ornaments. In Eastern Europe, Embroidery has existed since the time of Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. This is evidenced by the existence of paintings on tombs and embroidery decorations on clothing, seat covers, and tents. As for the Asian region, Embroidery decorations began to develop in the Qing Dynasty where embroidery decorations decorated royal robes. Likewise, in other countries, where Embroidery decorations grew and developed with their characteristics and uniqueness. The skill of Embroidery decoration has long been known in Indonesia, precisely unclear, but it has been around since the 18th century AD, even in the early 16th century. Pearl motif embroidery is already popular in Japan. At that time Embroidery was introduced by immigrants from China and continued by the Indian nation, who came with the aim of a trading mission. This skill was introduced to almost all corners of the archipelago. Embroidery decoration at that time was a luxury item because the thread used was combined with gold ornaments. At that time, embroidery was only intended as royal initials and to decorate the clothes of nobles and aristocrats. (Prihatini, 2019).

The diversity of culture and traditions that Indonesia has is one of the characteristics of this country compared to other countries, which makes Indonesia known as a multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious country. This cultural diversity is a wealth that continues to grow and unites the existing diversity. In the midst of the ongoing traffic of globalization and modernization, it is important to understand and appreciate the richness of the Nusantara Culture and maintain it so that it remains alive for future generations. The culture that is passed down from generation to generation is not just a series of traditions that are passed down from one generation to the next. More than that, the parallels from generation to generation illustrate an inheritance of noble values that fundamentally shape the identity of

the nation. In the richness of Nusantara culture, there is a blend of traditions and values contained therein, creating a strong moral and spiritual foundation for society. Values such as cooperation, honesty, simplicity, and mutual respect are not just empty slogans but are truly applied in the daily lives of residents on various islands in the archipelago. In remote villages, people still practice cooperation to help each other overcome multiple challenges and difficulties faced. Honesty is upheld as a moral foundation in interacting and doing business, while simplicity is a symbol of culture in living life. Not only that, the value of mutual respect is also upheld in various aspects of life, both within the family society and in national and state life. Both in remote villages and in big cities, these values remain strong pillars that colour every aspect of life, maintaining harmony and social cohesion amidst complex diversity. (Cahyawati, 2022).

According to research conducted by (Sulistiyowati et al., 2020), embroidery artisans face the challenges of globalization, including competition from foreign products. However, there has been no in-depth analysis of how embroidery artisans in Kudus can overcome these challenges while maintaining the uniqueness of their local culture. In addition, capital problems are also a major obstacle for small entrepreneurs. Therefore, it is important to explore how Kudus embroidery artisans overcome these obstacles, especially in maintaining traditional embroidery techniques amidst limited funds. On the other hand, the development of marketing networks is also hampered by large industries that are often more willing to offer credit to traders in the market. The various challenges faced by small industries should be able to make them go bankrupt quickly. However, there is one small industry in Pedurenan Kudus that has survived until now (Muasyaroh et al., 2019).

In accordance with the background, the purpose of this study is to examine the

art of Kudus Embroidery as a form of local cultural heritage and its potential in the creative industry. Exploring the historical development and characteristics of Kudus Embroidery, identifying the challenges faced by the local Embroidery industry, such as limited labour, raw materials, and design innovation, and analyzing the role of the Kudus order in preserving cultural values and contributing to the creative economy. Exploring ways to integrate local wisdom into contemporary Embroidery designs, increasing creativity and innovation in Embroidery production, and formulating strategies to develop the Kudus Embroidery industry amidst the currents of globalization and modernization with the research title Kudus Embroidery Artworks as a Form of Local Cultural Heritage.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses the quantitative Method with a Narrative Approach with the aim of analyzing the art of Kudus Embroidery as a form of local cultural heritage and its potential in the creative industry. Exploring the historical development and distinctive characteristics of Kudus Embroidery, identifying the challenges faced by the local Embroidery industry, such as limited labour, raw materials, and design innovation, and analyzing the role of Kudus Embroidery in preserving cultural values and contributing to the creative economy. Exploring ways to integrate local wisdom into contemporary Embroidery designs, increasing creativity and innovation in Embroidery production, and formulating strategies to develop the Kudus Embroidery industry amidst the currents of globalization and modernization with the research title Kudus Embroidery Artworks as a Form of Local Cultural Heritage.

Qualitative research is a type of research that produces findings that cannot be achieved (obtained) using statistical procedures or other means of

quantification (measurement). (Amtai Alaslan, 2021). Qualitative research is research that aims to understand social reality, namely seeing the world as it is, not the world as it should be, so a qualitative researcher must be someone who has an open mind. Therefore, conducting qualitative research properly and correctly means having a window to understand the world of psychology and social reality. Qualitative research is conducted in natural conditions and is of a discovery nature. Qualitative research is a key instrument. Therefore, research must have a broad theoretical background and insight so that it can ask, analyze, and construct the object being studied to be clearer. This research emphasizes more on meaning and is bound by values. Qualitative research is used if the problem is not yet clear, to find out the hidden meaning, to understand social interactions, to develop theories, to ensure the truth of data, and to research the history of development. (Muhammad Hasan et al., 2023).

Narrative is also a form of qualitative research that focuses on narratives, stories, or descriptions of a series of events that are related to the reality of human life. The process also uses in-depth interviews and observations whose research procedures are in the form of restoring, where researchers retell stories related to events experienced by research subjects. In this study, researchers used three data collection techniques, namely: interviews, observations and documentation. Interviews use interview guide instruments. Observations use observation guide instruments, and documentation uses cellphone camera instruments and document review sheets. In this study, the method used to test data validity is by using source triangulation and technique triangulation.

This research was conducted at Butik Dahlia, Pengajaran Village, Bae District, Kudus Regency, by interviewing the owner of the Embroidery business, Mrs. Sa'adah. The research time was October-November 2024. The subject of the research

was about Kudus Embroidery artwork as a form of local cultural heritage. The research procedure includes data collection conducted through in-depth interviews with informants, participatory observation, and analysis of documents that have been carried out relevantly as shown in Figure 1:

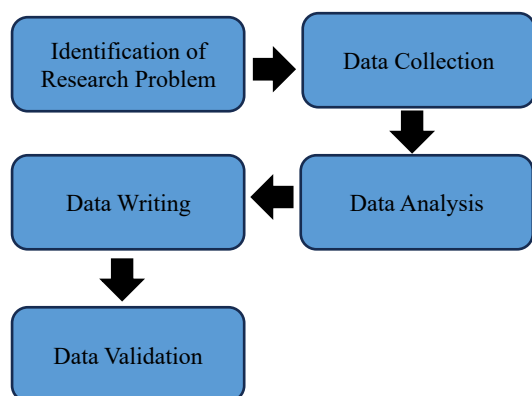


Figure 1: Narrative Research Flowchart

The research flowchart can be seen in Figure 2 as follows; according to (Nasution, 2021), Problem identification is an important initial step in research. Three main steps are involved in this process: finding the problem, finding the source of the problem, and creating a problem statement sentence. This research also emphasizes how important the problem is to explain why the topic was chosen.

According to (Utama, 2018), data collection methods in qualitative research are generally grouped into two types of methods, namely interactive and non-interactive techniques. Interactive methods include interviews and participant observation, while non-interactive methods include non-participatory observation, questionnaire techniques, document recording, and non-participatory participation. (Wijaya, 2018) There are several types of data collection techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. These three techniques are important in qualitative research. Observation is used as observation, in simple terms, the process of researchers seeing the research situation.

This technique is very relevant to use in research. Observation can be done freely and in a structured manner. Tools that can be used in observation are observation sheets, checklists, event notes and others. Some information obtained from the results of observations is space (place), actors, activities, objects, actions, events or incidents, time, and feelings. The reason researchers conduct observations is to present a realistic picture of behaviour or events, to answer questions, to help understand human behaviour, and for evaluation, namely measuring certain aspects and providing feedback on these measurements; in-depth interviews are a tool for rechecking or proving information or information obtained previously. The interview technique used in qualitative research is in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are the process of obtaining information for research purposes by means of questions and answers while face-to-face between the interviewer and the informant or person being interviewed, with or without using interview guidelines, where the interviewer and informant are involved in a relatively long social life (Rachmawati, 2017), and documentation, namely any process of proof based on any source, whether written, oral, pictorial or archaeological. (Datuk, 2019).

According to (Sugiyono, 2020) Data analysis techniques are the process of systematically searching for and compiling data that has been obtained. Data analysis in qualitative research is carried out during data collection and after data collection is completed in a certain period. Several analysis techniques, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion, are the main stages in qualitative research data analysis. Data reduction is carried out by continuously summarizing important information during the study to produce core notes that are relevant to the research theme. Data presentation systematically organizes information to facilitate concluding by simplifying narrative data without

reducing its content. The final stage is the conclusion or verification, where researchers compare the findings with the basic concepts of the study to ensure the appropriateness and validity of the results.

The process of analyzing and reporting narrative research is done in various ways. Researchers write research reports by retelling experiences told by participants. Although research reports may not be narratives, researchers must include a number of narrative features in research reports. The retelling by researchers is a central point in narrative research reports. In developing narrative research reports, researchers can include an analysis to highlight important or specific themes that emerge in the results of participant retellings of experiences. (Afan Faizin, 2020).

Data validation is a step to check the accuracy and integrity of data before it is used in an application or analysis. This process involves checking data based on certain criteria to find and correct errors or discrepancies. The validity process must also consider various potential problems or biases, namely: (1) minimizing participants telling stories that are not true or honest; (2) minimizing participants changing their perspective on events they experience; (3) minimizing researcher perceptions during the process of retelling participant experience data. (Afan Faizin, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Local Culture of the Kudus Community

Kudus is an industrial and trade area where this sector is able to absorb much labour and make a large contribution to the GRDP (Gross Regional Domestic Product). The entrepreneurial spirit and spirit of the Kudus community is recognized as tenacious; the motto *gusjigang* (good for trading) owned by the community reveals the character, that in running an economic business also uses the basis of religious knowledge. Kudus is an area formed by Sunan Kudus with a good work ethic.

Sunan Kudus himself was a trader. For Sunan, a pious person is someone who balances intentions with efforts, worship becomes a source of energy and a driving force for work passion. The Kudus community, who have a trading spirit and high work ethic, are able to be independent in the economic sector. A high work ethic arises from various challenges and hopes. Diligent hard work is the answer of time to the success of kretek cigarette industry entrepreneurs (Purbasari, 2018).

The spirit of commerce and industry that has been built since ancient times until now is one of the manifestations of the local culture of the Kudus community. Discussing local culture in a broad sense, it is said by (Purbasari, 2018) that local culture is not only expressed from the form and expression of a sense of beauty through art alone but includes all forms and ways of behaving, acting, and thought patterns that are far behind what is visible. The manifestation of local culture is found in tradition, religion, society, technology and art. Industrialization in the city of Kudus provides a model for preserving local culture in the economic and social fields. One effort to preserve local culture through industrialization is done by providing an understanding of local cultural products to the next generation. One of the results of industrialization is the character of a trading and industrial society, the daily life of an industrial society, industrial products and their characteristics serve to instil values and build character (Character Building) of society from generation to generation sustainably and continuously. Kudus Embroidery Art is one of the results of industrialization in the city of Kudus which provides a model for preserving local culture in the economic and social fields.

Embroidery Artwork

Kudus Regency has extraordinary embroidery potential. Before Indonesia's independence, Kudus Embroidery already existed and was well-known. With a home

industry scale in the early 1970s, its growth began to accelerate. The Kudus Kulon area, which was once inhabited by rich people, successful traders, and cigarette entrepreneurs, is where Kudus embroidery first appeared. Kudus embroidery has a long history from time to time. Kudus Embroidery has experienced many difficulties, joys, and sorrows to maintain this craft. Until now, Kudus Embroidery still plays an important role in supporting the local economy (Sulistyowati et al., 2020).

In 1988, Mrs. Sa'adah founded Bordir Kudus at Butik Dahlia in Peganjuran Village, Bae District, Kudus Regency. This effort began with a supportive environment, coupled with the many embroidery artisans in the area, this is the main factor in establishing the Dahlia embroidery boutique. At that time, Mrs Sa'adah had an interest in arts and crafts with a feminine nuance, starting with manual embroidery, which usually uses the ick technique.

"I started building embroidery from scratch with only one or two employees. The environment is supportive, and I like drawing embroidery motifs," said Mrs. Sa'adah.



Figure 2: Ick Technique

"Initially, we still had a lot to learn, but slowly, we started to be trusted to produce embroidered cloth," said Mrs. Sa'adah.

This embroidery business grew slowly during the first ten years. At that time, it received support from partners in Jakarta to provide fabrics in the process. Kudus Embroidery developed into a craft

community thanks to their dedication and hard work. Now, Kudus embroidery is one of the superior products based on local wisdom that reflects the cultural identity and creativity of the Kudus community.



Figure 3: Dahlia Kudus Boutique Embroidery Production Place

The Concept of the Cultural Inheritance of the Holy Community

The legacy of embroidery culture also includes significant social and economic aspects. By empowering women through skills training, Dahlia Embroidery contributes to improving community welfare. Research shows that embroidery crafts can be a leading commodity that boosts local economic growth. However, the challenges of modernization and changing market tastes require artisans to adapt to remain relevant (Nero et al., 2019)

Border Dahlia is now increasingly well-known thanks to its presence on social media, such as Instagram and WhatsApp. This platform allows Bordir Dahlia to reach more social media; Bordir Dahlia products are increasingly popular, not only among the general public but also among officials who are interested in the aesthetic beauty and creativity offered by the embroiderers. Not only relying on social media, but Border Dahlia also actively participates in various exhibitions organized by the government, both at the national and international levels. Participation in these exhibitions provides an opportunity for Border Dahlia to show its works to more people and expand its market reach. The capital support provided by the government has allowed Border Dahlia to improve the quality of its production and

open up opportunities for expansion into the global market. With more and more people getting to know Border Dahlia products, this boutique has now gained wider recognition, both domestically and abroad, as one of the high-quality embroidery makers as shown in Figure 4:

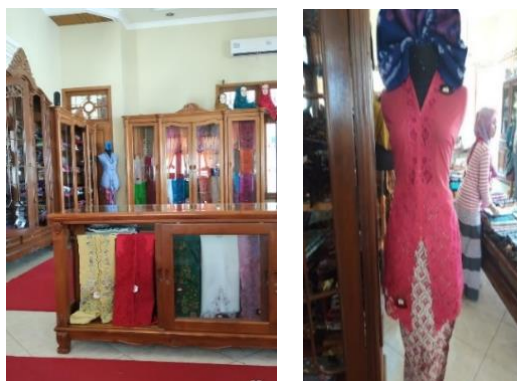


Figure 4: Embroidery Work

Kudus Embroidery Art is a Local Cultural Identity

Kudus embroidery art, especially Menara embroidery with the ick technique, can be considered one of the rich and unique local cultural identities in Indonesia. This embroidery is known for its fineness and detail, making it highly sought after in the fashion world. The history of ick embroidery in Kudus has been around for more than 50 years, with strong roots around Kudus. Initially, this craft was done by homemakers in the area using manual sewing machines. Over time, ick embroidery has developed into a product that is known not only in Kudus but also throughout Indonesia and abroad, such as Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Thailand, and Malaysia. The characteristics of Kudus embroidery lie in the beautiful floral motifs and the use of rich colours. Kudus embroidery artisans often create designs inspired by local flora, such as cloves and tobacco, which are part of the cultural identity of the area. The quality of this manual embroidery is often considered superior to computer embroidery because of its detail and artistic beauty.

However, although this embroidery art has high cultural value, it faces serious challenges in terms of preservation. The younger generation tends to be uninterested in continuing this tradition, preferring to work in other industrial sectors. Thus, Kudus embroidery art is not just a handicraft but also a symbol of local cultural identity that must be preserved. Efforts to introduce and teach embroidery techniques to the younger generation are very important so that this cultural heritage does not become extinct. Preserving Kudus embroidery art will make a significant contribution to Indonesia's cultural diversity and increase public awareness of the importance of maintaining ancestral heritage.

CONCLUSIONS

Embroidery as a local cultural heritage is that embroidery is not only a form of artistic expression, but also depicts the identity and cultural richness of a region. As a local cultural heritage, embroidery has important historical and social values, reflecting local wisdom, traditions, and hereditary skills. Through the preservation and development of embroidery art, future generations can continue to appreciate and preserve this cultural wealth while enriching the diversity of Indonesian culture. Therefore, it is important to support and appreciate embroidery artwork as part of efforts to maintain priceless cultural heritage.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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