

Ornament Exploration Based on the Beliefs of Sangihe

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ABSTRACT

Sangihe is located at the tip of North Sulawesi, Indonesia, that borders Philippines maritime territory. Sangihe is rich with traditional culture and in the past, had its own local belief in guardian spirits. The *Sundeng* religion, or to be exact the Sundeng community, worshipped the spirit of nature. Their tradition and ritual that has been done in the past was influenced by European arrival and has been changed through time. The people of Sangihe also have their own original traditional textile that is called *kofo* fabric. The fabric was made of manila hemp, or the locals called it *hote*. The fabric making method itself is already extinct, mainly because of the lack of enthusiasts who want to learn the art of *kofo* and the uncertainty of the target market.

This research used a qualitative approach to visualize the narration of Sundeng beliefs into visual elements for textile ornaments. The expected result of this research is a set of novel motifs, based on narrations about the great three spirits of Sundeng while adhering to the aesthetics of the traditional *kofo* fabric. To conclude, this study's output is a set of developed ornaments for present textile demands

Keywords: *Sangihe, Sundeng, Kofo, Exploration, Ornaments*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Indonesia is a vast nation that owns various cultures based on each region and its own beliefs. Even in clothing, Indonesian has various traditional fabric ornaments with unique regional traits. Among them, there is the Sangihe regency in the province of Sulawesi Utara. The people of Sangihe livelihoods are divided into two types of residences. The people who live on more extensive island farms to exchange goods for their necessities, and the people who live on the smaller island do fishery for a living. They have high mobility, a friendly attitude, and respect the value of rule for living from their ancestor.

Above all, they have their valuable cultures, such as their particular fabric and past religion. Sangihe people have a unique fabric called *Kofo* fabric that is made of abaca tree fiber. The *Kofo* [1] fabric is already extinct for reasons such as the making difficulty and the lack of market target. The low

market for this fabric was beginning to happen when cotton fabric started to enter Sangihe. Sangihe weaving activities experienced a decline starting in 1889 when the abaka banana trees were cut by the Dutch colonial government's order and replaced with cotton, sugar cane, and tobacco.[1] Sam Pantouw, the creator and product developer of *Cofo* Indonesia said that *kofo* is already extinct.

Kofo fabric is hard and stiff, similar to the Philippines' manila hemp because both were made from the same fiber[1][2], yet it was used as a base for traditional dancing costumes. This fabric has its essential meaning on the ornament and the color. Textile crafts in Sangihe have been produced for a long time for room divider curtains, table mats, fabrics for bedding, and clothes. In the past, outsiders introduced a simple loom tied to the body called *gedogan*. [1] This weave uses a continuous arrangement of warp threads. In Sangihe the woven thread is made from abaca fiber (*Musa textilis* or *Musa mindanesis*), a type of banana in Sangihe language called *kofo* or *hote*. This *hote* plant is also

known as *manila hemp*. [2] China, India, and Arabia influence most decorative motifs in such as religious ceremonies and as dowry. The products are used in various activities of human life, Sangihe Indonesian textiles. [3] In addition to clothing, textile tribe knows several fabric coloring techniques that use natural materials around them. Red, purple, brown, using the bark of mangroves (*mangroves*) and *seha* or noni (*Morinda citrifolia*) scattered on the island of Sangihe, the red color comes from *sumba*. From the evidence of the fabric found through the remaining color effects of the old fabrics, no yellow dyeing technique was found. The colors that appear on old *kahiwu* are red, purple, brownish, light brown, which are the original colors of the *hote*.

(a)



(b)



Figure 1 (a) A *kofo* room divider and handkerchief made approximately 120 years ago [1]; (b) an authentic *kofo* fabric owned by Cofo Indonesia

Besides that, the Sangihe community has an old belief called *Sundeng* [1]. This religion is not just a religion; *Sundeng* is more like a form of society that believes in the greater power. Their great three spirits are *Ghenggonalangi*, *Adittinggi* and *Mawendo*. *Ghenggonalangi* is the excellent spirit that, as high as the sky, ruled the earth. *Adittinggi* is the spirit of higher land, and the people of hills worship him. On the other side, *Mawendo* is the spirit of the sea, and the people of the coast worship him. In the past, the *Sundeng* community do a sacred ceremony called *menali* for their spirits. The ceremony is a holy ritual of appreciating the spirit, and it was an off-limit event for their elders. *Menali* itself was meant to give an offering to the spirits. Their elders are called *ampuang*, and they do *menali* in some specific area. Not every village can do the ritual. The participant of *menali* will form a circle and put the sacrifice in the

middle. They sacrifice a human in the early periods, but then the community changed the ceremony into another one called *midaroro*. The ritual system remains the same, but the offerings switch from human to pig, and now they offer *nasi kuning* (Indonesian turmeric rice) to another spirit called *Himukudi*. The alteration is related to the colonial arrival in the district of Sangihe.

The culture of Sangihe, *kofo* fabric, and *Sundeng* beliefs are almost being erased from society, even in the local area. [1] The low market for *kofo* fabric and the spirits of *Sundeng* has been changed to *Himukudi* only. For instance, this exploration research is expected to bring the culture to a new light so people can feel them again.

1.2. Objective

This research aimed to increase the value of *kofo* fabric by exploring and designing new sets of ornaments. These ornaments are based on the characteristics of traditional *kofo* fabric patterns. By analyzing traditional *kofo* motifs, this research explored the old culture of the *Sundeng* community so it would not completely disappear from history. The new set of motifs were designed based on the visualized version of the three great spirits of *Sundeng's* territory: *Ghenggonalangi* of the sky, *Adittinggi* of the higher land, and *Mawendo* of the sea.

With this exploration research, the writer hopes to help bring up *kofo* textile products and the extinct *Sundeng* beliefs.

1.3. Methodology

This research methodology utilized visual adaptation strategies [4], which Sunarya utilized several research methodologies that became the primary references for the methods used in writing this paper, namely the visual adaptation strategy in analyzing textile motifs. The primary method to be carried out is to collect data, analyze, then combine the analysis results into new decorative forms for *kofo* fabric.

The methods used in this research are as the following:

1. For starters, the writer collected data through a literature study.
2. The initial method used in this research is an aesthetic-based qualitative approach with visual elements [5] to identify and decipher

the aesthetic components in the traditional *kofo* fabric and clothing, such as color, shape, and origin.

- An explorative approach is used to combine the characteristics of *kofo* ornaments and *Sundeng* old beliefs together through visual adaptation. This method is a strategy to keep

the culture alive and prevent them from vanishing entirely in modern society.

The visualized version of *Sundeng's* three-spirit territory's object variation is planned to be made into abaca fabric ornament design adapted to the current market demand.

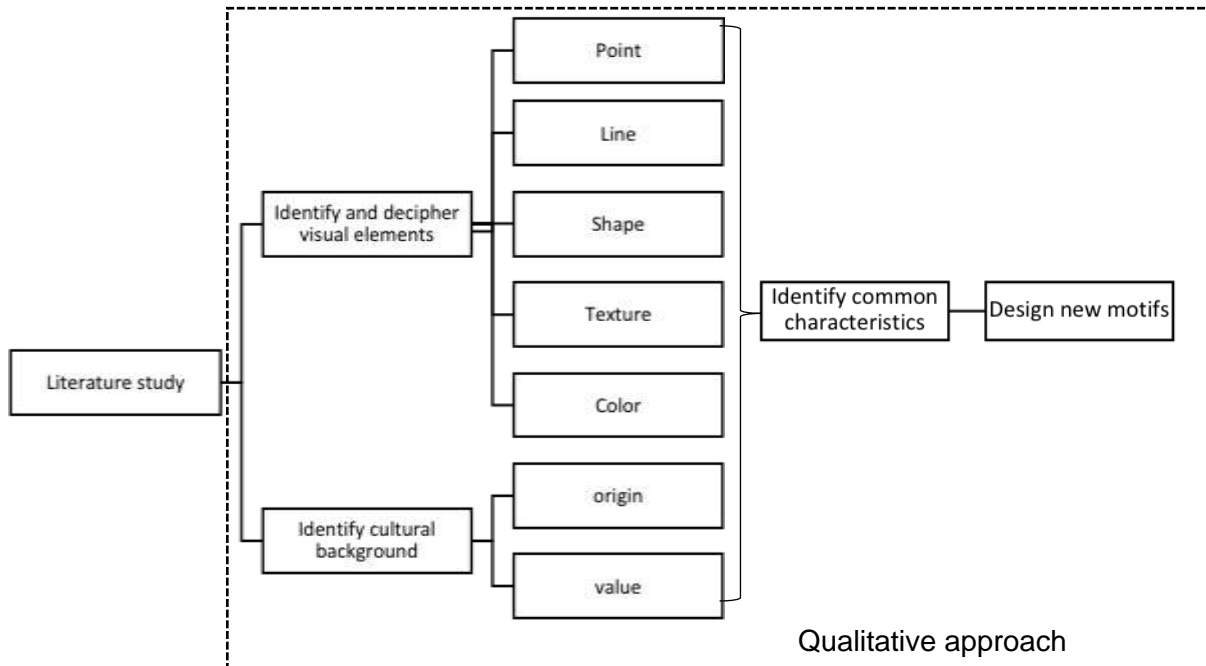


Figure 2 Methodology flow chart

2. LITERATURE STUDY





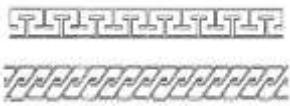
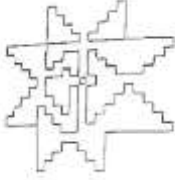
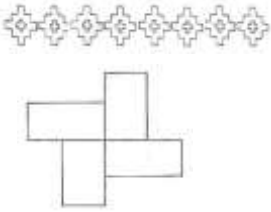
This analysis is written based on the methodology that Sunarya has written in his dissertation summary [4]. The data collected will be described from the name, meaning, the origin of the shape, and its characteristics will be analyzed to create a new form module that does not ignore its authenticity.

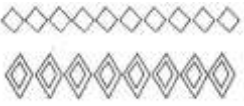
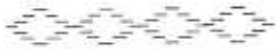
2.1. Identifying *kofo's* ornament basic shape

Table 1. Ornament basic shape and meaning [1][7]

No.	Pattern	Name	Meaning	Description	Characteristic
1.		<i>Sohi</i>	Sharp	Sohi pattern is an ornamental variety in the form of sharp slices with a basic rectangular shape.	Spiral Rectangle Stacked Repeated

The ornament of *Sangihe* is done modestly and as it is, but it symbolizes strong meaning and highly valuable philosophically. The ornaments of *Sangihe Talaud* including traditional objects and their culture[6]. *Kofo* cloth decorations are named in the *Sangihe* language, such as *sohi*, *isin kemboleng*, *kakunsi tiwatu*, *kui*, *salikuku*, *malihuge*, *papaohiang*, *nalang u anging*, *nihabe*, *taluke*, *luwu* and *dalombo*. [1]

2.		<i>Isin kemboleng</i>	Shark's tooth	This pattern symbolizes power and courage.	Pointed Each module made of two triangles
3.		<i>Kakunsi tiwatu</i>	<i>Kakunsi</i> : Key <i>Tiwatu</i> : whole, perfect, complete	The pattern of <i>kakunsi tiwatu</i> was made from the shape of the key.	Spiral Rectangle
4.		<i>Kui / kui kakandong</i>	-	This ornament shape was made from the shape of a weaving machine for palm fiber string made from enau plant.	Resemble to rectangle shape
5.		<i>Salikuku</i>	<i>Likuku</i> : curve	<i>Salikuku</i> indicate safest, stable, and steady situation. <i>Salikuku</i> ornament was made from the shape of the fern.	Spiral Rectangle
6.		<i>Malhige</i> (<i>Taluke Malihige u ginatolang</i>)	<i>Liru</i> : something hidden	<i>Malihige</i> is originated from <i>liru</i> word that means something hidden.	Rigid Repeated pattern
7.		<i>Papaohiang</i>	<i>Poahi</i> : doing here and there	<i>Papaohiang</i> is originated from the word <i>poahi</i> that means doing here and there.	Resemble eight-pointed star Resemble set of triangles
8.		<i>Nalang u anging</i>	The game of four points of the compass	This pattern was made from the shape of a children's toy made from coconut leaves. The leaves	Has four corner Made from the basic shape of a rectangle Rigid

				will spin if it faced with the wind.	
9.	-	<i>Nihiabe</i>	<i>Hiabe</i> : seven	The word Nihiabe combined with nalang u anging and Nihiabe mean seven variations of stars.	
10.	-	<i>Taluke;</i> <i>Ghinantolang</i>	<i>Talu</i> : stack, stacked <i>Ghinantolang/ghinantole</i> : intersect, touch	<i>Taluke</i> is originated from <i>taluk</i> word that means stack; stacked.	
11.		<i>Lombang</i>	Pattern	-	Rectangle Repeated pattern
12.	-	<i>Luwu</i>	Soft, soften	This shape symbolizes the gentleness of character	
13.		<i>Dalombo</i>	Fishnet	-	Resemble the rectangle shape

2.2. Fabric's dye: the source and meaning.

Besides the ornaments, there is the various traditional color of Sangihe clothing. Each color has its meaning, but the use of color mainly boosts the characteristic of the ornament. The fabric's color also has an essential role in determining the color of the accessories that will balance the overall coordination of the outfit. Beyond its function to give meaning and

beautify, color can also attract the market's attention so that its use needs to be considered so that it becomes a new strength for the new ornaments to be formed. Sangihe people frequently use yellow (*maririhe*), purple (*kamumu*), red (*mahamu*), white (*ledo*), and green (*ido*) because they are locals' favorites. [1]

Table 2. Fabric's dye [1]

No.	Color (in local language)	Color (in English)	Source	Meaning
1.	<i>Maririhe/ tinong bahu</i>	Yellow	Processed by boiling green leaves.	Symbolize purity and greatness.

2.	<i>Kamumu</i>	Purple	Made from mangrove's bark.	Symbolize loyalty.
3.	<i>Mahamu/ salaka</i>	Red	It is processed by boiling turmeric tuber mixed with <i>kapus</i> plant.	Symbolize bravery.
4.	<i>Ledo</i>	White	This color is <i>kofa's</i> original color.	White is the base color of <i>kofo</i> fabric, and it symbolizes purity.
5.	<i>Ido / melong</i>	Green	Made by boiling green leaves.	Symbolize patience and composure in going through the hard times.

2.3. Potential market preference

Due to this research's objectives, it is necessary to know attributes of market preference for textile products. Changes in market preferences are crucial. They evolve from people's cultures. Preferences allow consumers to sort products according to their wishes. Based on research conducted by David Sukardi Kodrat in 2021, style and color are included among the attributes that are preferred by the market. [8]

The first is the style attribute which plays an essential role in creating an identity or social market. It also provides to build one's overall self-esteem.[8] The general outfit style is a way of looking to project a person by mood. Style is a fundamental element in fashion design. Style is grouped into two main categories, namely classic and trendsetter. Classic looks that are modish in the long term can be suitable for many occasions and welcomed by the market. On the

other hand, the trendsetter is the one that sets the trend. The trendsetter is indispensable for enthusiastic consumers and followers of current trends.

The second is color.[8] It said that color control aesthetics in fashion products and design. It has many roles: conveying messages and moods, building character, deciding target market, appealing attention, and guiding the purchasing decision. The higher-class market prefers premium colors that tend to be dark, neutral, or even colors that give a clean impression.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 The common characteristic of motifs and color

Through literature study and the analysis of aesthetic elements that have been carried out, the writer found some similarities in the shape, color, and value.

Table 3. Common characteristic





Shapes	Color	Meaning
Geometrical	Natural earthen color	Symbolizes courage and bravery
Rectangular		Symbolizes purity
Triangular		Symbolizes faithfulness
Rigid		Symbolizes gentleness
Spiral patterned		
Repeated shapes		


3.2 The inspiration for ornament exploration

After analyzing aesthetic elements, observation of Sangihe's natural environment is conducted for

exploration purpose. Images of Sangihe's environment are taken from Sangihe Stories' account on Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/sangihestories/>) due difficulties reaching the area during the pandemic.

Table 4. Image reference

No.	Reference Image	Description
1.	 [9]	The sky is the spirit <i>Ghenggonalangi's</i> territory. The clouds bring rain and prosperity to residents in the highlands and on the coast. between rainfall and wind, there is usually a close relationship with each other.[1] Characteristics of image: repetitive
2.	 [9]	The spirit <i>Mawendo</i> rules over the coast and the sea. Sulawesi Sea is a trade route, and this affects the progress of education and community in the Sangihe Islands [1] Characteristics of image: ripple lines, repetitive
3.	 [9]	Sangihe residents also cultivate crops in their lives. The people of the highlands grow crops and pray to the <i>Adittinggi</i> spirits of his past. Mangrove forests can be found on Sangihe Main Island [1] Characteristics of image: pointing on the top, repeated shapes
4.	 [9]	The fisherman needs a boat to accompany them through the sea. A boat is a transportation device for people to survive in the sea. However, the boat of Sangihe's fisherman has a unique shape with a wooden wing on both sides.[9] This ornament exploration is made for the people of the coast who pray to the <i>Mawendo</i> spirit. Characteristics of image: symmetrical sides, triangular in front view, spiral wings on the sides





5.		[9]	<p>The hill is the place for the people who pray to the spirit <i>Adittinggi</i>. Forests are generally at the top of hills.[1]</p> <p>Characteristics of image: triangular, repeated shapes</p>
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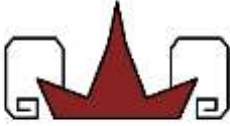

4. RESULTS

From the basic shape of *kofo* fabric ornaments and the potential market preference, several modules for new textile ornaments composition have been explored, and here are some of them. Exploration of the new

forms of ornaments that have been made has been adapted to the characteristics of the actual decorative fabric of *kofo* fabric so that it does not lose its original nature. The characteristics maintained are that they tend to be geometrically rectangular, triangular, rigid, spiral patterned, and are repeated shapes. The detailed information is written in the table.

Table 5. Exploration module

No.	Module	Origin	Description
1.		Cloud	<p>Inspired by the basic shape :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Kakunsi tiwatu</i> (repetitive, spiral) - <i>Salikuku</i> (repetitive, spiral) - <i>Lombang</i> (repetitive) <p>The cloud ornament repeated shape represent the vast sky in Sangihe.</p>
2.		Wave	<p>Inspired by the basic shape :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Salikuku</i> (repetitive, spiral) - <i>Kakunsi tiwatu</i> (repetitive, spiral, rectangle) <p>Wave is the fishermen's company. This ornament represents the rich ocean of the Sangihe archipelago.</p>
3.		Tree	<p>Inspired by the basic shape :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Sohi</i> (spiral, stacked, repeated) - <i>Isin kemboleng</i> (triangular points) <p>The tree brings life to people, so this ornament represents a fortune for the farmer of Sangihe.</p>
4.		Boat	<p>Inspired by the basic shape :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Salikuku</i> (spiral) <p>The boat is a valuable mobility device for the</p>

			Sangihe people. This ornament module is made in the hope for the Sangihe fishers to come home safely.
5.		Hill	Inspired by the basic shape : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Malihuge (rigid, repetitive)</i> - <i>Papaoihang (resemble to set of triangles)</i> <p>The land is people's home—the people of the hill pray to the great Aditinggi.</p>

As explained in the previous section, style and color are preference attributes that significantly affect product sales in the market. Therefore, the ornament exploration module is made in a traditional style and muted colors to find a marketing target for the combination of *kofo* ornaments on abaca fabric.

5. CONCLUSION

With this exploratory research, it can be concluded that the primary forms of decoration on traditional *kofo* fabrics can be updated by adjusting the target market's preferences. A qualitative aesthetic-based approach methodology describes the aesthetic components of traditional *kofo* fabrics, such as color, shape, meaning, and origin. The result that can be seen is the shape characteristic of the ornament, which is rectangular, triangular, forming a spiral, and repeated horizontally. While in terms of coloring, *kofo* cloth is usually dyed with boiled plant dyes. The colors used to give color to the fabric have their respective meanings and roles in supporting each other. In terms of fashion preferences, color and style play an important role in smooth marketing. Therefore, these two things become references in exploring the new ornament module. The exploration of the new ornaments has characteristics and refers to the existing *kofo* ornaments from Sangihe. In addition, the chosen basis is the Sundeng belief which has disappeared from the Sangihe society.

In this exploration research, the writer hopes to bring back the *kofo* fabric and the *Sundeng* beliefs that have been extinct. For instance, we can find that this can be achieved by forming an ornament module resulting from exploration by combining the characteristics of the ornamental variety and market preferences. Thus, for the following research opportunity, new possibilities may arise to use the

exploration module that has been formed in this study to become the business capital of the local population in the development of patterned abaca cloth.

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