

The Concept Of The Design Of Contemporary Karawo Motifs In Teenagers Fashion

by isnawati mohamad

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**International Seminar on Language,
Education, and Culture**

Malang, October 25-26, 2017
Faculty of Letters
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INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, AND CULTURE

Malang, October 25-26, 2017
Faculty of Letters
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FOREWORD

Dear ISoLEC presenters and participants,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the International Seminar of Language, Education, and Culture 2017 hosted by Faculty of Letters, Universitas Negeri Malang. This seminar takes on the theme "Redefining Language, Literature, Arts, and Teachings in Global Era" due to the urgent need to follow the issues and development of language teaching, language, arts, gender perspective, and multicultural education in global era.

ISoLEC attempts to provide an academic forum where both presenters and participants can upgrade and refine their knowledge and skills as well as disseminate their insights, thoughts, and share their best practices relevant to the seminar theme. The seminar addresses key issues such as the teaching of language, literature, and arts in global community, language and globalization, literature and globalization, arts and globalization, the use of ICT in learning language, literature, and arts, gender perspectives in language, literature and arts, multicultural education in language, literature and arts.

This seminar invites prominent scholars in language, literature, and arts, who share their insights and expertise addressing the theme. We proudly welcome Dr. Badrul Bin Isa from Universiti Teknologi Mara, Malaysia, Dr. Ruanni Tupas from National Institute of Education, Singapore, Dr. Aly Abdelmoneim Abdelwanis from Asian Parliamentary Assembly, Cambodia, and Dr. Michaela Zimmermann from Ramkhamhaeng University, Thailand.

We are delighted to see many academics, researchers, practitioners, teachers, and students participating in this seminar. We strongly encourage all of you to take as much benefit as possible from this conference.

Have a great conference day.

Malang, October 25, 2017

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THE CONCEPT OF THE DESIGN OF CONTEMPORARY KARAWO MOTIFS IN TEENAGERS FASHION

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to develop a concept in designing urban-wisdom-oriented contemporary Karawo clothing for teenagers. This qualitative research employed methods, such as observation, interview, and literature review in collecting the data. Furthermore, the data were analysed in some steps, e.g., data reduction, data display, and summing up the conclusion. This study emphasises on: 1) The Karawo motifs, 2) Symbol or icon of the urban culture, 3) Teenagers clothing. The results of identification and analysis reveal that: 1) the present Karawo motifs is from the shape of flower, geometric, fish, ship, symbols or logos; 2) the symbols or the icon of urban culture represents value, such as i) craving for glamorous lifestyle, and having fun in which reflected from the menu, tableware, and eating places, ii) yearning for freedom and aiming at showing off self-ability which is signified by unusual and, sometimes, absurd appearance. 3) the characteristics of fashion around teenagers are: i) simple or minimalist as most teenagers are simple and to-the-point, ii) asymmetric composition which aims at expressing the feeling of being anxious and submissive, iii) highlighting their posture to express teenagers' high self-confidence. Considering these results, the concept of the design of Karawo fashion for teenagers is an adaptation concept by employing techniques, e.g., deconstruction, eclectic, deformation, and stylisation in creating objects into a design subject material. This is to forge a new contemporary Karawo motifs that fits the teenagers.

Keywords: Motifs Designing, Contemporary Karawo, Urban Culture

INTRODUCTION

A survey by Bank Indonesia, Gorontalo branch on respondents whose age is varied reports that wearing Karawo clothing is not suitable for the teenagers (18 percent). Moreover, the other 33 percent assert that the motifs of Karawo is not appealing and looks monotonous (Bank Indonesia, 2011, p.3). These 18 and 33 percent might be the representative of the teenagers since they rarely wear Karawo.

Such a condition blame the motifs and the style of Karawo cloth which does not attract the teenagers due to the formal impression with conventional pattern and decorative. Although the Karawo looks elegant, such characteristics make the cloth looks less dynamic. Psychologically, teenagers whose age ranges from 12 to 21 are mostly dynamic and moody since this condition is the part of their process of self-development (Monks, et al, 1982, p.258-262).

To attract teenagers' interest to appreciate and wear Karawo and its accessories, various fashions specifically designed for teens are essential. It is possible to realise such a target by inventing modern Karawo decoration and fashion designs which are based on the

cultural symbols representing the current popular urban trends. However, there are considerations prior to creating urban-oriented designs in fashion. Urban culture associate with punk-style, wastingmoney, hedonism, instant, and consumptive lifestyle. On top of that, visual symbol, such as a car, a package of a particular product, fashion, advertisement, and other popular products are also related to the urban culture. Therefore, ones are required to be selective in adopting such a culture in creating a new fashion concept to retain the value of the local wisdom within the new design.

By that, this study aims at 'finding out the efforts in creating a modern concept or a design of Karawo fashion based on the urban culture'. The purpose of this study is to develop a concept in designing urban-wisdom-oriented contemporary Karawo fashion through analysis of the current Karawo motifs and fashion around teenagers as well as studies on the urban culture. Furthermore, the significance of this study is to provide varied designs of decoration and fashion of modern Karawo which may inspire the designers of Karawo in developing motifs and fashion mode of Karawo later on.

Studies on Karawo

The term *Karawo* or *mokarawois* derived from Gorontalo language which means embroidery or toembroider. People in Gorontalo rarely used the word since they usually address the Karawo products with "Karawo embroidery". However, the word *Karawo* became widely used again in 2011 in which the first *Karawo Festival* was held. Karawo refers to a technique in creating ornaments on a fabric by cutting, removing, and embroidering it; this requires a skilful hand skill (Sudana, 2014, p.89).

Sudana and Hasdiana, (2009, p.51) argue that the uniqueness of Karawo lies on the techniques, which are quite different than other embroideries, instead of the motifs of the ornaments of a Karawo. In other words, it is possible to develop the motifs of Karawo ornaments. Through this research, it is possible to create the modern urban-culture-oriented motifs by applying Karawo embroidery techniques on fabrics. Moreover, this is also to invent various Karawo fashion.

By that, the Karawo product of this study refers to the motifs of the ornament which holds a potential to further develop it since the current ones look old-school and formal; also, such designs are not teen's favourite.

Studies on Urban Culture and Contemporary Artworks

The urban culture is identic to the culture of people living in urban areas and their tempting, modern facilities and lifestyle. The values of urban culture have become a guideline and orientation for teenagers in the way they socialise. In addition, teenagers tend to be rebellious toward the local wisdom which they see it as something old, identic with villages. According to this context, the urban culture is more advantageous and way cooler and modern than the one of the rural areas. On the other hand, such an exotic of urban culture is always associated with its problems and complexity. Some examples are the act of violence, robbery, the habit of wastingmoney, sexual abuse, and other vandalism issues. It blames distribution and consumption of icons, codes, and symbols of unfair urban culture which leads to the necessity of establishing a concept called "urban wisdom".

Sabana (2014, p.116) explains that urban wisdom refers to the way of life that should be applied and obeyed by a society to bring the benefits for the life of the society. Integrating

“urban wisdom” to the aspect of artistic creativity or designing is essential in conceptualising a better society as previously mentioned. Icons or symbols of urban culture should be equally distributed through possible opportunities. Urban culture sensibility draws the teenagers’ interest from some aspects of life, such as their fashion and style. Therefore, it is possible to adapt and combine the icons of urban culture with the aspects of local wisdom to create a design of urban-oriented contemporary Karawo design.

The term contemporary refers to a dimension of time, the present or contemporary time, which keeps running and following the development of a society. Contemporary artworks develop in the post-modern culture in which the diversities are being acknowledged (Sabana, 2014, p.142). In such a concept of contemporary artworks, traditional symbols and practices can be adapted and integrated with icons of the modern urban culture to create original artworks.

The Karawo technique as a practice of traditional arts, based on the concept of contemporary artworks, is able to be adapted and utilised in designing new motifs integrated with the icons of urban culture on a particular textile. Furthermore, the textile is served as the base for various fashion and style of the teenagers, known as contemporary Karawo fashion. This reflects the image of urban culture as well. The fashion not only functions as an ordinary clothing, but also as something that shows the identity of the people who wear it-whether they come from the elite or commoner, from the village or city, or whether they are elders or teenagers.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

A qualitative method was employed to explore the issue since the data are not in the form of numbers that require statistical analysis; instead, a qualitative analysis is applied to scrutinise the data. This study was conducted in some Karawo entrepreneurship, boutiques, and teen clothing stores within Gorontalo. The data were collected through 1) observation, which aims at collecting the data regarding the information of the present motifs of Karawo and the characteristics of teenage fashion. 2) interview, this is to clarify the motifs of Karawo. The interview was conducted with the reliable informant, e.g., Karawo designers, artisans, and entrepreneurs. 3) Reviewing literature was to obtain secondary data, specifically the data regarding contemporary fashion and urban culture. This was obtained from scientific journals, books, magazines, and other relevant literature.

The data were further analysed qualitatively by employing interactive analysis technique based on the Huberman and Miles analysis (Sugiyono, 2010, p.246-253). This consists of steps, such as 1) data reduction, compiling relevant data and discarding irrelevant ones; 2) data categorisation, grouping the data according to the focus of each problem; 3) data display, arranging and displaying the data in chronological order to construct an understandable structure of the data; 4) summing up the conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Conceptualisation, regarding the context of this study, is defined as a research aimed at finding verbal concepts as the base in designing contemporary Karawo motifs for the teen. This consists of several steps as explained as follows:

Identification and Analysis on Current Karawo Motifs

Identification and analysis of the motifs of Karawo are due based on the source of the idea, the ways of drawing, as well as its visual structure. The categorisation of the shape of the ornaments is divided into plant-shaped, animal-shaped, human-shaped, natural-object-shaped, symbol-shaped, artificial-shaped, and combination-shaped ornaments (Sudana, 2014, p.8-12).

According to the results of identification, it is revealed that not all these ornaments become motifs or pattern in the art of Karawo. The plant-shaped, animal-shaped, geometric-shaped, artificial-shaped, symbol or logo, and combination-shaped dominate the motifs of the decoration of Karawo embroidery. On the contrary, other motifs, e.g., human-shaped and natural-object-shaped (sun, moon, stars, mountain, and water) are left behind. The popular motifs are drawn by stylisation technique of various tones or styles, size, composition, as well as colours. Furthermore, among those motifs, plant-shaped ornaments are widely used in almost every Karawo clothing and decoration of household appliances; this leads to the massive development of this pattern. This trend is followed by the geometric, animal-shaped, and artificial-shaped motifs.

Some plants, such as flowers, corn, coconut trees, and creepers are the inspiration in designing Karawo and these are further being stylised into the embroidery. Not all of the parts of these plants are drawn on an embroidery, drawing only a particular part of the plant, i.e., leaves or flowers, is also common in designing a motifs of the embroidery. Stylisation of the plant-shaped motifs is based on the size of the base fabric. An interview with one of the Karawo designers reveals the inspiration in designing the motifs of the embroidery. A designer John Koraag, 56 years-age, explains that the size of the motifs in his artworks is designed after the shape of flowers or motifs of Batik which depict the image of classic fashion. Big-sized motifs with more complex look are less preferred by the teens since they prefer simple and bold motifs. The following picture is the example of big-sized plant-shaped motifs in a Karawo.

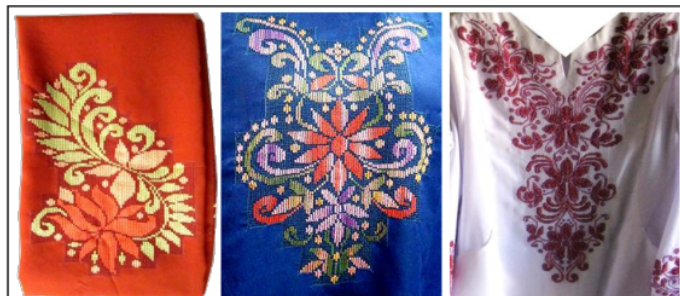


Figure 1. Big-Sized Karawo Motifss: Plant-Shaped

Geometric-shaped motifs are mostly in the form of triangle, square, circle, and other shapes with a number of variations applied. In addition, these motifs are combined with plant-shaped motifs to make it more artistic; the size for this motifs is also varied, from the small one to the bigger one. The technique in designing such a big motifs is by repeating the same motifs in a base fabric which is further lined-up or focused on one centre according to the size of the fabric. Applying various colour schemes or combining with elements of the plants due to create an impression of being richness and to show the complexity of the artworks. In addition, the geometric motifs is mostly designed symmetrically to emphasise its strong sense of balance. This motifs basically depicts a simple and bold tone which is widely-used in male's fashion or clothing decoration. The following Figure 2 is the example of geometric-shaped Karawo motifs.



Figure 2. Geometric-Shaped Karawo Motifs

The animal-shaped motifs, in compared to well-developed plant-shaped and geometric-shaped motifs, are not that popular and widely used. Fish and butterfly are among the example of animal motifs. The composition that is used in the base colour of the fabric is clustered composition. The motifs are sometimes represent the natural elements like plant-shaped and animal motifs. However, the composition. How animal motifs.



Figure 3. Animal-Shaped Karawo Motifss

Negeri Malang (UM)
October 2017

Similarly, the artificial motifs are also not that popular as the design in most cloth; instead, these motifs are widely applied in interior decorations. Boats or ships are usually used in creating these stylised motifs. In an interview on April 10th 2017, John Koraag explains that clothes with ship motifs are subject to customers' demand particularly in certain occasions, such as *Sail Tomini*, a marine-themed event. This reveals that the clothes with artificial object motifs are rarely produced; it depends on certain events so that the motifs will be based on the theme of the events. Ultimately, the fashions are distributed to the public which remarks the development for the motifs.

The design of artificial-object motifs is pretty identical to the real object with the single composition. In addition, the stylised motifs, for example, ship or boat, are designed as the primary motifs with asymmetrical balance composition, while other motifs, such as ripples, become the staple of the main motifs. The motifs will be in one colour or combination of some which contrast with the colour of the base fabric; this is due to emphasise the motifs. The following Figure 4 shows the examples of artificial-object motifs.

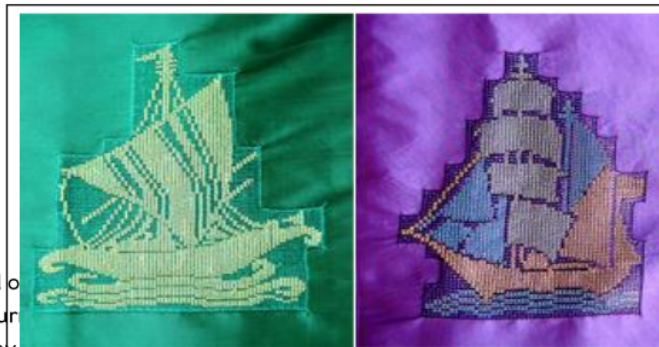


Figure 4. Artificial-object Karawo Motifs

Based on the observation, it can be inferred that all the current Karawo motifs are not change due to its popularity among people. It is believed that such motifs are not that preferable especially by the teenagers since popular objects are mostly preferred to represent the identity of youth. By that, adapting modern object, icon, or symbols that reflect the personality of teenagers should be considered prior to creating attractive design and motifs of Karawo for teens.

Icons and symbols of the local culture of Gorontalo, e.g., symbols in the wedding ceremony are not widely used as a motifs in Karawo embroidery. There are some motifs that represent the culture of Gorontalo, yet the meaning embedded is usually about the traditional culture. Ultimately, such motifs do not draw the attention of teens since they consider themselves beyond the traditional trend. In addressing the problem, deconstructing the traditional symbols, i.e., rendering meaning according to the phenomenon and perspectives of

youth nowadays is applicable in creating Karawo design for the teenagers. Complex Karawo motifs in a fabric make it monotonous which happen to be adults or elderly's favourite. This contrast to the teens' fashion preference: a simple, bold, and dynamic motifs.

Identification and Analysis of Urban Culture and Its Symbols

Urban culture is simply defined as the habit exclusive to a community living in a city. Furthermore, this term also refers to the mindset, feeling, and behaviour of the urban community in their modern urban life (Muthoharoh, 2013). This is in line with the definition of popular culture by Ian Chambers (Machek, 2) that pop culture plays a major role in the emergence of urban culture in its entity. In other words, pop culture and urban culture is without question an inseparable matter. This is because of that pop culture, according to Ahmat Adam, refers to a cultural object directed towards the public (as cited in Rahman, p.112). Furthermore, pop culture is also seen as an entertainment resulted from the current technology, e.g., film industries, advertisements, television shows, magazines, shifts on music genre, communication technology, sports, trend, and fashion.

Lounges or other gathering sites, which are fully occupied by people at a particular time, for example at 5p.m to 6.30p.m., is also considered as the characteristic of the pop culture. Fast food restaurants are the example of the favourite gathering venues around teenagers. Adolescents think that there is nothing better than fast food in such a fast-paced life. Figure 5 illustrates the condition of a fast food restaurant as follows:



Figure 5. People Queuing in a Fast Food Restaurant

Another example of pop culture is the massive use of the smartphone as a conceptualisation of the glamorous lifestyle. According to a report by Katadata.co.id, in 2014 there are 325 millions of smartphone users in Indonesia-this outnumbers the 252.16 million of the total population in Indonesia. Similarly, the data by the Ministry of Communication reveal that 321 million of pre-paid mobile service users outnumber those 4.3 million of postpaid service users (from databoks. Katadata.co.id., 2016).

The function of mobile phone has been shifted to wider use; its use is not only as a tool of communication but also as a multifunction device to access the Internet, to play games, to

listen to a music, to capture precious moments with its camera (either to take selfies or group pictures), and even to finish a certain assignments. Using the mobile phone for social media purposes, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Path, is the prominent utility of a phone. The more sophisticated a mobile phone is, the more addicted a teen to such a gadget; the massive use of smartphones is illustrated in the following Figure 6:



Figure 6. The Use of Mobile Phones around Teenagers

The above debates on the existence of urban culture reveals some phenomenon represented the life of an urban community, for example, 1) rejection of activities and traditional cultural icons or symbols, which are conventional and being inherited from generations to generations, since teens consider that such aspects do not fit with their era or their current condition; 2) the massive existence of modern social media on the Internet, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; 3) aiming a glamorous life or hedonism lifestyle which is represented by the food (menu and tableware) or a luxury house with its facilities, such as sport centres and private vehicles; 4) pursuing freedom and efforts to show self-identity reflected in one's appearance which sometimes looks unusual; 5) ever-changing lifestyle, embedding a dynamic characteristic to be able to adapt to the rapid growth of the situation of a particular era.

Identification and Analysis of Clothing and Fashion Around Teenagers

The characteristics of teenagers are exclusive: they are obsessed with self-actualisation, they are dynamic, ambitious (in terms of their achievement), they want to be different and at the same time, they want people to accept them in their social life. These affect some aspects, such as the preference of teenagers in selecting their apparels. For instance, teens' favourite of fashion is the most recent or trending ones. These sometimes look sensual, showing off the beauty of the body; in addition, teens like contrast and bold colours than those with dark or gloomy impression with simple and dynamic looks. These are based on the style of today's teenager's fashion which can also represent their simple, bold, and straight-forward personality. Minimalist fashion adored by adolescents is recognised by the style with revolves around mini fashion style, simple motifs or decorations applied only on the particular part of the cloth, e.g., waist, arm, neck, and chest., to attract people's attention. The motifs are sometimes in the form of wrinkles, patches, or ribbon folds; these decorations are

eye-catching in compared to the clothing. It seems that adolescents want to show the beauty of their body through minimalist fashion with conspicuous motifs on a certain part of the clothes; in addition, this also signposts that they are different than others, specifically the adults. However, teens struggle to be stylish with such fashion styles since most fashions are branded and expensive. This leads them to be hedonist-they believes that the pursuit of pleasure is the most important thing in their life, they do not prioritise their primary needs. The following Figure 7 is some example of minimalist fashion style well-known around teenagers.



Teenagers' tra others, are clearly de fabric or motifs as shown

g different than ion of the base

Figure 7. Minimalist Fashion Style



The above picture of the top and the ski

on whereas the colour and red, blue and white, or red and blue. These colours are not similar in terms of its nature, make it looks contrast and dynamics as well. Applying such a design creates an astounding look on the people. This is what the teenagers expected of selecting fashion style.

Figure 8. Colour Contrast Fashions

It can be inferred that the fashion around teen, including the decorations of the clothes, tend to embed characteristics, such as 1) simple or minimalist that highlights a particular element, such as, minimum colour uses and icons designed as the primary motifs of a cloth; 2) imbalance composition to create an impression of being unstable and agitated; and 3) depicting the body through tights that fit the posture of one's whole body or partial.

The Concept in Designing Karawo Motifs

The term "concept", according to Kamus Bahasa Indonesia (<https://kbbi.web.id/konsep>, 2017), refers to an abstract entity: a design idea related to a concrete event, or even a producing ideas. In this study, such a term is defined as the abstraction of thought regarding the processes or approaches to invent something or to

address a particular issue. This is particularly related to the concept in designing urban-culture-oriented Karawo motifs for teenagers; this ultimately remarks the emergence of contemporary Karawo design that will attract the attention of today's' teens. Furthermore, the concept will be based on the results of identification and analysis of the current Karawo motifs, symbols of urban culture, as well as the style of teens' fashion.

The results regarding the Karawo motifs show its current characteristics, such as 1) The motifs are mostly inspired by shapes, such as flower, geometric shapes, fish, ship, symbol, or a logo of a particular institution. On the other hand, cultural icons and symbols of Gorontalo, as well as urban culture or modern symbols, are rarely used as a motifs of Karawo embroidery; 2) The design of the motifs looks somewhat complex with fully-designed composition without any focal point of an element in a cloth; 3) Motifs, with the exception of logo, serve as a decoration instead of as a medium to express its beauty; 4) Motifs embed the sense of tranquillity, beauty, and exclusive.

The above debates on the existence of urban culture reveals some phenomenon represented the trends of an urban community, for example, 1) rejection of conventional activities and traditional cultural icons or symbols, which are being inherited from generations to generations, since such aspects are old-school; 2) the massive existence of modern social media on the Internet, e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram; 3) aiming a glamorous life or hedonism lifestyle which is represented by the food (menu and tableware) or a luxury house with its facilities, such as sport centres and private vehicles; 4) pursuing freedom and efforts to show self-identity reflected in one's appearance which sometimes looks unusual; 5) ever-changing lifestyle, embedding a dynamic characteristic to be able to adapt to the rapid growth of the situation of a particular era. Such urban lifestyles can be visualised into symbols that embody various meaning, such as traditional culture, modern tableware (e.g., plate, fork, and spoon), wealth symbols (money, car), luxurious sports facilities, as well as the composition of unique or popular symbols. These can be turned into something artistic through certain techniques.

It can be inferred that the fashion around teen, including the decorations of the clothing, tend to embed characteristics, such as 1) simple or minimalist that highlights a particular element, such as, minimum colour uses and icons designed as the primary motifs of a cloth; 2) imbalance composition to create an impression of being unstable and agitated; and 3) depicting the body through tights that fit the posture of one's whole body or partial. Some considerations are essential prior to design new Karawo motifs based on this uniqueness; this is to retain the social norm of the newly-designed Karawo.

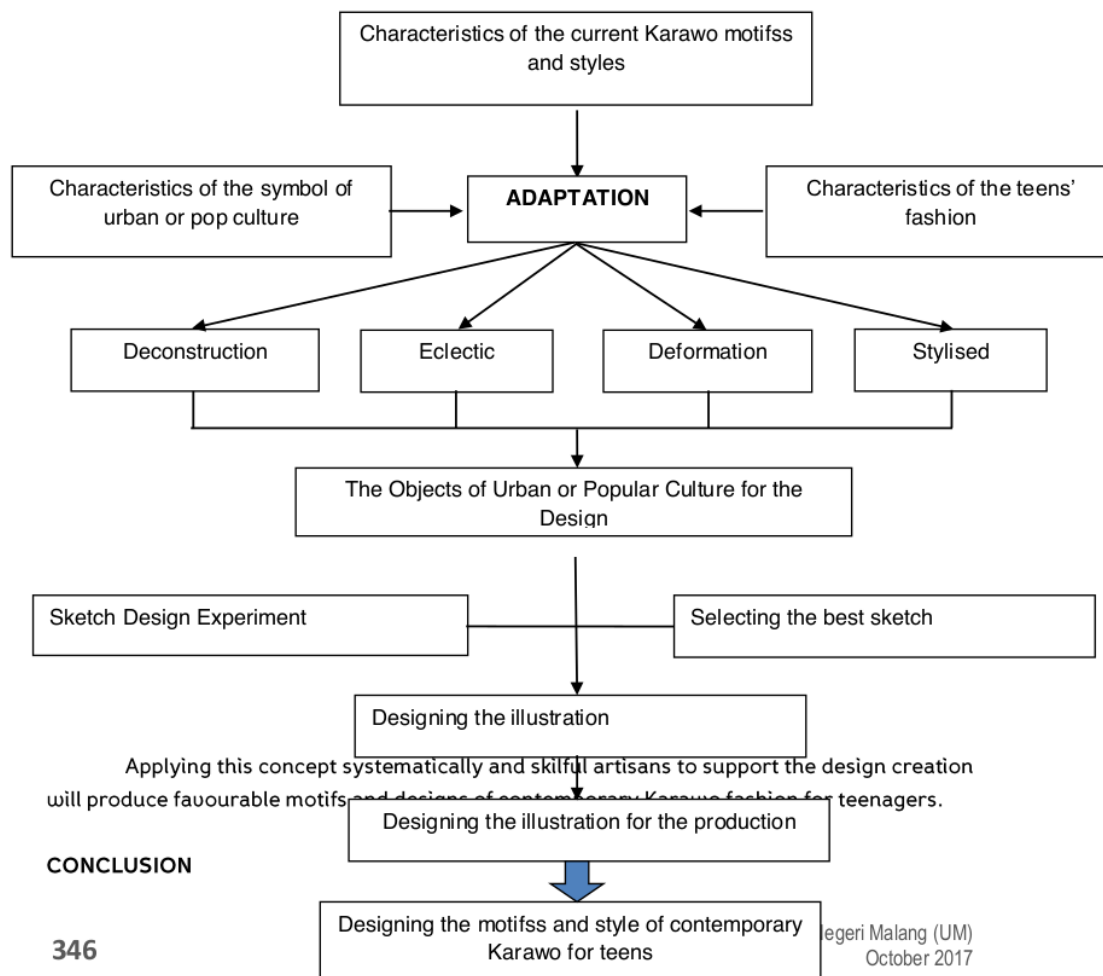
As a result, the adaptation has been considered as the most suitable concept in designing Karawo motifs for teens. Adaptation is basically a concept in the study of biology which refers to a process of organisms to adjust themselves to its environment as a means of survival. Pelly (1998, p.83) asserts that adaptation is an ability of organisms to survive in its environment to survive; this term is also defined as approaches to address the issue of survival. The term adaptation, according to the context of this research, refers to the concept of the alteration of Karawo motifs to design the suitable motifs for teens through the shape adaptation process.

In such a context, adaptation is regarded as a process of creating a new cloth design from a base design with some modification or adjustment. Kartika (2007) breaks down the methods into four: deconstruction (meaning transformation), eclectic (combination of

different elements in one art or design composition), deformation (depicting the most representative feature of a particular object), and stylisation (a drawing technique in which the object is drawn differently to emphasise a certain impression for people). (p.71-72). Each of these can be applied separately or in a combination of two or more methods.

Ultimately, a variety of shapes, icons, and symbols can be adapted as the object of a new design adored by the teens. Through deconstruction, a new design that embodies a new meaning can be created by adapting the icons of local culture. Furthermore, the eclectic style clothing enables a designer to combine more than one modern objects in one composition. The stylisation can also produce design favoured by the teens, i.e., symbols in the social media as well as something related to the life of urban people.

To put it simply, the adaptation concept, which involves deconstruction, eclectic, deformation, and stylisation holds a potential to turn the symbols of modern and popular culture into a design of contemporary Karawo fashion for teens. The examples of modern cultures are a wedding dress, social media, and other urban culture icons. This concept is illustrated in the figure as follows:



The results of the identification and analysis of the current Karawo motifs, urban cultures and its symbols, as well as the current fashion around teenagers, reveal that the adaptation concept is considered as the primary concept in creating the design of the motifs and fashion of urban-culture-oriented Karawo. Furthermore, this concept consists of techniques, e.g., deconstruction, eclectic, deformation, and stylisation in adapting the objects into the motifs of Karawo fashion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The concept proposed needs to be conceptualised as it currently remains as a writing. Therefore, applying the concept in the Karawo fashion for teens in the further production of the clothing is necessary to promote Karawo as the fashion adored by the adolescents. This is also to ensure the long-term sustainability of the development of Karawo further.

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