



KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN MICRO ENTERPRISES (CRAFT AND ARTS): SILUNGKANG SONGKET WEAVING SAWAHLUNTO CITY

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Abstract

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are an important pillar in driving the economy in Indonesia. Songket silungkang, part of the SMEs in Sawahlunto City, is not only a cultural product but also an industrial product that drives the economy. Current market demands and challenges are imperatively transforming the business world towards a knowledge-based economy. Research was carried out to obtain an operational model for the use of knowledge management at the microbusiness level, by identifying knowledge management in existing microbusinesses. Through a literature review, the field of knowledge management is identified. In this way, relevant theories and studies are discussed to build a foundation for the interview as well as to discover various factors that may be relevant to building a bridge between knowledge management and application in the field. Data was collected through observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and document study. Knowledge in craftsmen (SMEs) tends to be embedded as a "whole personality". They often have difficulty articulating the technical or scientific principles behind what they know. In the context of product quality, defining knowledge as an object (i.e., valuable information) provides an opportunity to improve knowledge management compared to the work process and motif design. Craftsmen in small and medium enterprises, whose knowledge and technical skills are highly valued by colleagues, by the market (customers), and in society. The knowledge acquired and retained by craftsmen is critical to the long-term survival of arts and crafts organizations and their profitability. There are opportunities to use and formalize knowledge management for craftsmen and customers in the context of maintaining the quality of woven products.

keywords: Knowledge management; microbusiness; crafts

INTRODUCTION

Background, Problem Formulation, Research Objectives and Urgency

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as a business entity are an important pillar in driving the economy in Indonesia. SMEs absorb 97% of the total existing workforce and collect up to 60.4% of total investment. The craft and arts industry is part of SMEs which takes up a significant and strong portion. This is proven by its ability to grow by 32% during the previous COVID-19 pandemic, namely in the period January - November 2021. Seeing the large contribution of SMEs, improvements should be made not only from the financing side but also from the organizational management aspect.

Songket silungkang in Sawahlunto City, apart from being a cultural product, is also an industrial product that drives the economy. The silungkang songket industry experienced ups

and downs, growing in 2005. However, at the end of 2019, the craftsmen's income decreased due to the pandemic. BPS data (2019, 2020 & 2021) also illustrates this condition as shown in the following table:

Tahun	Jumlah Usaha
2018	375
2019	380
2020	378

Table 1. Number of Small Industrial Businesses and Household Weaving Crafts

Source: BPS data for 2019, 2020 & 2021

Micro-enterprises tend to set a short-term orientation in their business operations, as evidenced by the lack of the concept of continuous renewal and modification (Pelamonia, 2020). Current market demands and challenges are imperatively



transforming the business world towards a knowledge-based economy. In a knowledge-based economy, knowledge is seen as an important resource for gaining competitive advantage (Grant, 1996). An important strategic asset so that organizations can remain competitive in the market is knowledge (Barão et al., 2017). Rapid changes in the global economy, technology, and consumer demands have occurred today (Payal et al., 2019). It is difficult for companies to understand and predict these rapid and complex changes. This rapid and complex change makes it difficult for companies to understand and predict it. Therefore, management is tested to forecast possible outcomes and recommend actions on changes occurring in this unstable, uncertain, complex, and unclear atmosphere (Payal et al., 2019). Considering the conditions and development of micro-businesses, research should be carried out to obtain an operational model for the use of knowledge management at the micro business level. The first step that must be taken is to identify knowledge management in existing micro businesses. From the description above, the author is interested in carrying out research with the title "Knowledge Management in Micro Enterprises (Crafts and Arts): Silungkang Songket Weaving, Sawahlunto City" with a problem formulation of how to acquire, create, store (*storing*), *sharing*, disseminating, developing, and placing/utilizing *knowledge* in the Silungkang Songket Weaving business in Sawahlunto City. The aim of the research is to identify the process of acquiring, *creating*, *storing*, *sharing*, *spreading*, *developing* and *deploying knowledge in the Silungkang Songket Weaving business in Sawahlunto City*.

Silungkang Songket Weaving

Songket weaving is a form of craft arts development in a direction that is focused on development for economic or commercial purposes ["craft industry"] (Raharjo, 2011). Silungkang is a small village with an area of around 4,800 hectares with the majority of its residents working as farmers and traders. Starting from the 19th century, the exact time is not yet known, when traders from Silungkang brought woven songket to Malaysia. Traders are interested in doing the weaving themselves. Step by step how to weave is studied starting from the loom, threads to the dyeing process (Efendi, 1981). In the early days of weaving in Silungkang, the weaving equipment used was a very simple loom, namely using threads stretched over one sheet of cloth and then woven by inserting a sheet of thread and then gedoging it with a piece of wood. However, along with developments over time, loom equipment such as non-machine looms and machine looms have begun to emerge. Songket weaving began to develop into a source of community economy. The products are clothing from the King's Majesty, the Pagaruyuan Royal Council, the Penghulu's Majesty, and the Palace Council.

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management refers to a systematic and organization-specific framework for capturing, acquiring, organizing, and communicating both the tacit and explicit knowledge of organizational members so that other

organizational members can utilize it to become more effective and productive in their work and maximize organizational knowledge.

The following steps are followed to represent the KM process cycle model:

1. Create knowledge. Knowledge primarily comes from employee experience and skills. Knowledge is created when people determine new ways of doing things or develop knowledge. Sometimes if knowledge does not reside within the organization, external knowledge is brought in, for example, technology transfer that occurs from a research laboratory to a business organization.
2. Capture knowledge. The knowledge created needs to be stored in its raw form in a database. Most organizations use various types of knowledge repositories to capture knowledge.
3. Improve knowledge. New knowledge must be placed in context so that it can be acted upon. This is where human insight or tacit knowledge is captured and refined along with explicit knowledge.
4. Storing knowledge. Codification of tacit and explicit knowledge helps make knowledge understandable and usable at a later date.
5. Managing knowledge. Like a library, knowledge must be continually updated. It should be reviewed to verify that it is relevant and accurate. So, most tune companies have well-defined departments that really keep knowledge up to date.
6. Spreading knowledge. Knowledge must be available in a format that is useful to anyone in the organization who needs it anywhere and at any time. New technologies such as groupware, Internet/intranet, and other DSS technologies help spread knowledge.

Innovation is the confluence of concepts and knowledge that benefits a business and adds value. Every time we discuss concepts and discoveries, we automatically generate knowledge. Organizations rely on innovation as a critical process to adapt to an ever-changing environment and deliver unique products to the market to gain competitive advantage. Most businesses/business units do not utilize the internal information they already have to innovate. Knowledge management is about supporting innovation, the generation of new ideas, and the exploitation of an organization's thinking strengths (Parlby & Taylor, 2000). The essence of knowledge management with innovation is to provide a framework for management in their efforts to develop and improve their organization's ability to innovate.

Rapid changes in the global economy, technology, and consumer demands have occurred today (Payal et al., 2019). In addition, knowledge management is seen as a meaningful tool/resource for survival in a complex environment (Venkitachalam & Willmott, 2017). In the eyes of academics and practitioners, knowledge is important (Giampaoli et al., 2017). Innovation is the confluence of concepts and knowledge that benefits a business and adds value. Every time

we discuss concepts and discoveries, we automatically generate knowledge. Most businesses/business units do not utilize the internal information they already have to innovate. Knowledge is a key resource that must be managed if improvement efforts are to be successful and businesses remain competitive in the global marketplace (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). Knowledge management means doing what is necessary to get the most out of knowledge sources such as tactics and explicit knowledge (Sabherwal & Becerra-Fernandez, 2003). The literature on knowledge management is concerned with processes and practices for managing intellectual capital (Sabherwal & Sabherwal, 2005).

Methods

The research uses a qualitative approach. When applying qualitative methods, it is critical to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation as well as gather evidence for the desired new model. According to Clark, Burrell, and Morgan (1981), social science research offers four different research paradigms, namely structural, interpretive, radical humanism, and radical structuralism (Clark, Burrell, & Morgan, 1981). Each paradigm encourages different research methods and thus focuses on different fields of study (Greener, 2008). Since the aim of this research is to explore the existing literature and expand the knowledge management approach, this research will be built on the interpretive paradigm, which “rests on the assumption that social reality exists in our minds and is subjective and multiple”. Therefore, the perception and construction of reality by actors in micro-small business organizations (workers and owners) can be investigated through discourse analysis or unstructured interviews.

Through a literature review, the current state of research in the field of knowledge management is identified. In this way, relevant theories and studies are discussed to build a foundation for the interview as well as to discover various factors that may be relevant to build a bridge between knowledge management and application in the field. With keywords related to this research area, such as innovation, knowledge management, organization, and enterprise theory, articles, and books are found on platforms such as Google Scholar and libraries.

The location of this research is focused on Sawahlunto City. Data was collected through observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and document study. The data in this research is qualitative, therefore qualitative data analysis techniques are used with the steps: (1) data reduction, (2) data presentation, and (3) verification. (Creswell, 2009)

Results

Products, motif designs, production and marketing processes

Currently, existing silungkang weaving generally falls into the category of micro-enterprises (*Micro Enterprise*) which have the characteristics of craftsmen but do not yet have entrepreneurial characteristics. Micro businesses are part of the types of businesses as regulated in legislation no. 20 of 2008 concerning Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

Referring to this law, micro businesses are defined as productive economic businesses owned by individuals or business entities in accordance with the criteria for micro businesses. The criteria for a micro business is a business that has net assets reaching IDR 50,000,000 and does not include buildings and land where the business is located. The maximum annual sales proceeds from micro businesses are IDR 300,000,000.

Silungkang weaving is a business that has been passed down from generation to generation. Currently, the average weaver is in the third generation (results of interviews with sources), while from literary sources silungkang weaving has existed since the 19th century and experienced a golden age around 1959 - 1963. Subsequently, it experienced ups and downs in its development. Between 2005 and 2017 there was a relatively stable increase in demand for silungkang weaving. However, in early 2019 to 2021 there was a decline due to the pandemic, especially domestic demand. From mid-2021 to early 2023 silungkang weaving again experienced a turning point in increasing demand. Unfortunately, after the first quarter of 2023 (after Eid) there will again be a decline in demand as stated by Mrs. Rita, one of the INJ Silungkang micro-weaving entrepreneurs:

I don't know sir... whether it's because of the economy or because of the political year... Since after Eid there have been no more requests from Jakarta. Usually, we regularly send every month

The superior woven product in the silungkang weaving business is woven fabric for clothes and sarongs. The weaving length for clothes varies from 2.6 m to 2.75 m with a processing time of between 2 and 3 days. In an average week, two pieces of clothing material, or around 5.5 meters can be produced. Meanwhile, the material for the sarong complete with scarf requires a weaving length of 2.4 to 2.5 meters. With a minimum processing time of around or a week, the material for one sarong can be produced. Apart from weaving for sarongs, scarves, and clothes, there are also special products such as scarves and shawls for certain events or activities with motifs tailored to the customer's wishes.



Figure 1. Several forms of products are produced (Widodo, 2023)

Weaving craftsmen obtain looms from their parents' inheritance, buying them themselves and assistance from the government. The Sawah Lunto government, through related agencies, has provided assistance in the form of looms to craftsmen in Silungkang several times. The looms used by craftsmen are non-machine looms (ATBM) which are relatively the same in type and specifications. According to the mechanism or drive of the weft feeding system (Turak), the ATBMs used today consist of two types. The first is ATBM with a manual and semi-automatic drive/binocular (weft feeder). In a manual drive, the turak/binocular is operated directly by the craftsman by pushing the turak to pass the thread. With a semi-automatic drive, the turak/binoculars move directly following the steps. Visually you will see the difference between the two in the position of the tower seat. On semi-automatic drives there is a turak/scope holder in front of the weaving comb as shown below.

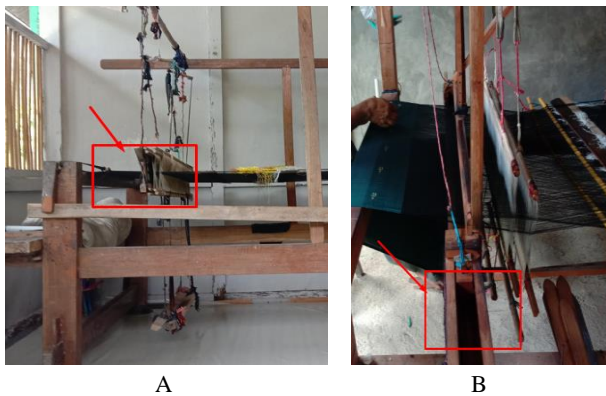


Figure 2. Machines A are manual and B are semi-automatic (Widodo, 2023)

Currently, there is a shift in weaving methods or stages that must be done by craftsmen themselves. If previously every crafter had to carry out thread arranging steps (making templates/prints/patterns) to determine the motif to be woven, now this step does not have to be carried out because they can use the services of other craftsmen. The pattern-making stage has become a job in itself. Not all craftsmen are capable and can do it, because making this pattern requires not only the ability to convert motif images but also requires precision and patience. As stated by Wati, one of the craftsmen, who always uses this service due to the complexity and length of time it takes. The same thing was also confirmed by Dewi, a craftsman who was able to make patterns, that previously all craftsmen were on average able to make their own patterns. However, now in line with the increase in orders and the length of time it takes to make patterns, it is considered more practical to use the services of craftsmen with this expertise.

In the past, we made motifs ourselves, but that took a long time, now we can use the services of people who are used to it. Faster, now I am sometimes asked to make flowers (motifs)

Furthermore, according to Dewi, the skill of making patterns is only possessed by around 30% of craftsmen, or out of 10 craftsmen, there are around 3 craftsmen who can make motifs.

Currently, it is found that there are differences among weaving craftsmen in choosing the products to be produced/worked on. Wati, who once had three weaving children (weaving craftsmen who worked for other craftsmen who had capital and/or weaving equipment) preferred to work on sarong products. Songket weaving for Wati is an additional business for her family. Wati's husband, Ajis, is a quite successful collector of spices (resin, cinnamon, etc.). According to him, woven sarong products have a higher selling value, namely Rp. 500,000/ piece. In one week, Wati can produce two or two strands of woven sarong material. Sarong weaving is relatively more difficult because the motifs are not symmetrical on one loom. This difficulty results in a longer time to complete it. Apart from skills, physical endurance/stamina is also needed in the process. In one day, Wati also allocates more of her time to work on the weaving orders. Even though she no longer has weaving children, Wati still has 3 looms in 3 different locations (her own house, herb shop, and her mother's house). Orders were made in shifts in the morning at his mother's house, in the afternoon at the spice shop, and in the afternoon until evening at home.

Dewi, on the other hand, prefers weaving for clothing materials. According to the goddess, it takes a long time to produce one woven piece of sarong material. Even to do other work (housework) he will have difficulty dividing his time. To work on a piece of woven sarong material, it takes him 3 to 4 days. According to him, technically he was able to work on 2 strands in one week but all his time was spent on the loom, as he said.

There are those who can work on 2 sarongs a week but just stay there (in front of the loom), stopping only to eat, pray, and cook. Can't do anything else

Considering her abilities and opportunities, Dewi decided to prefer orders for woven clothing materials. By considering the price and production capabilities in the calculations, woven clothing products are more profitable.

Marketing of woven products among craftsmen still largely relies on shops or collectors around Silungkang. Apart from going through shops, there are also craftsmen who go directly to users, but the percentage of this direct marketing is relatively small for reasons of order sustainability. Even though the price is more profitable, the turnover obtained is smaller than through shops or collectors. Some craftsmen have even tied themselves up with shops or collectors using a bonded bond system. This agreement is in the form of providing production capital in the form of materials to craftsmen with the consequence that the craftsmen will sell goods to shops or collectors who provide capital at a slightly cheaper price and reduce the costs used. This was conveyed by Rita, the owner of the INJ shop who has 80 weaving children.

If the thread comes from us (the shop) then the price of the fabric we buy will be reduced by the thread. You have to pay for the thread in installments

The quality of woven products (fabric and sarong materials) is determined by the shop or collector when the product is sold/handed over by the craftsman. Products that are deemed to meet the criteria set by the store will be purchased while those that do not will be rejected. So craftsmen or weaving children are truly responsible for the quality of the woven products because they are considered partners, not hired craftsmen. There is no supervision by shops or collectors during the work because of the long distance and the location of the craftsmen being spread out. As stated by Rita

If it doesn't match what was requested after checking the results, we will of course reject it. If craftsmen have been given thread, they cannot repay the thread debt in installments. So we call them partners, not wage earners. As wage earners, of course, we have to supervise their work. And what's more, the galeh partner/child craftsman is far from Kubag, Lunto is not around here.

Discussion

Knowledge management for innovation in the motif design process and efforts to maintain product quality are quite interesting things to study further. Remembering that silungkang weaving is a traditional/cultural product that must be kept "traditional" while maintaining equipment and manual work methods. Technological intervention in these two things will actually reduce the value of the product itself. As stated by one of the craftsmen, there are already shops or industries that use modern looms (using machines) with neater results than those made by craftsmen but in terms of prices, they are cheaper. Especially if the customer really knows and can differentiate between craftsmen and machines. So innovations in terms of equipment and workmanship aspects have a narrow or limited space to be implemented.

Knowledge management in workmanship and motif design

The ability to weave is a skill that is generally possessed by Silungkang residents, both women and men, as well as local residents (Kubang and Lunto). Craftsmen, in general and for the most part, acquire knowledge and skills passed down from generation to generation from parents and family. The rest get their skills from other craftsmen, usually, these craftsmen are not from Silungkang and the surrounding areas. Knowledge of weaving, especially using looms, is considered normal. Even when the local government provides equipment assistance, which is usually accompanied by training on how to use it, specifically for weaving equipment, and in silungkang it is not provided/provided.

The skill of using a loom is relatively easy to learn and master. A person (beginner craftsman), who wants to weave and has never tried it at all, on average needs between one and two months to become proficient in using or mastering a loom. The process of mastering knowledge and skills is obtained through observation, discussion (asking

questions/question-answering), and then putting them into practice. In the context of tradition, this is in line with the opinion of (Messeni Petruzzelli and Albino, 2012), that knowledge is mostly tacit and related to the traditions of the organization itself.

When a craftsman is able/skilled at weaving, it means that apart from that he has/mastered knowledge about operations and reading and applying motifs on a loom. These two knowledges are possessed simultaneously when the craftsman acquires or obtains weaving knowledge. This knowledge is imperative for craftsmen to master to produce valuable products. From the perspective of the distribution of craftsmen's skills, it can be expressed as in the following table.

Table 2. Craftsman Knowledge and Skills

No	Knowledge, ability/competence	The Nature of Knowledge	Number of Master Craftsmen
1	Operating the Loom	Imperative	Lots
2	Reading Motifs	Imperative	Lots
3	Making Patterns on a Loom	Optional	Few
4	Mendesain Motif	Optional	Fewer

Source: Processed 2023

After mastering weaving skills (operating the loom and reading and applying motifs), some craftsmen choose to take their skills to the next level, namely by making/setting patterns on the loom and designing motifs. The ability to make patterns and design motifs not only requires additional knowledge such as calculating and making scales but also a careful and patient attitude. Apart from that, experience/hours of flying in reading motifs is something that greatly influences the mastery of this ability.

Just like the ability to weave, to gain the ability to make patterns and design motifs, craftsmen must ask more questions, discuss with other craftsmen, and try various motifs. Each craftsman exposes different experiences and stages when gaining knowledge. All adapt and depend on the knowledge inherent in previous craftsmen (givers and recipients of knowledge). Even though there are no uniform stages or methods, craftsmen agree that repeated practice with different motifs is an important success factor in mastering this skill.

In this context, knowledge can be seen more as a process (i.e. human ability) rather than merely as an object (i.e. valuable information). Knowledge is defined as a process so it is dynamic, personal, and very different from data (separate and unstructured symbols) and information (media for explicit communication). (Sveiby, 2001) defines knowledge as the capacity to act (which may be conscious or not). The emphasis of the definition is on the action element: The capacity to act can only be demonstrated in action.

Knowledge in craftsmen (SMEs) tends to be embedded as a "whole personality", which includes types of skills or expertise that are informal and difficult to describe, which are often referred to in terms of the "technical dimension". Experienced craftsmen (MSMEs), have developed a wealth of skills at their fingertips, after years of experience. Yet they often have difficulty articulating the technical or scientific principles behind what they know.

Apart from that, one of the difficulties in retaining knowledge related to motif-making is due to the characteristics of weaving machines which are still traditional/analog. Motif storage is done by tying threads that arrange the motifs based on the order of the images. One loom can only store three motifs. This means that if there is a fourth motif to be made then one of the previous three motifs must be discarded. This condition limits the ability of tools and craftsmen to produce. If you force more than three motifs on one tool, it will reduce the quality of the weaving.

From the description above, we can categorize knowledge management among weaving craftsmen as natural knowledge management. Natural knowledge management is more concerned with things related to the way people learn and communicate with each other. For the most part, this has nothing to do with technology. It should only be the weaving process that "maintains its traditionality" and not the management of knowledge. But it seems that the management of songket weaving knowledge (for example, storing motifs) is also punished as a result of maintaining its "traditionality".

Knowledge management on product quality

With regard to efforts to maintain product quality among craftsmen (SMEs), they are still individual and depend on consumer standards. There are two categories of consumers, the first is individuals or organizations who are direct users of the product. A small portion of products are absorbed by consumers in this category, they come, choose, order, and pay directly to the craftsmen. The craftsman's reputation, connections, and network of friends are a kind of initial quality guarantee for the product produced. Usually, information about who uses craftsmen's products becomes an additional reference besides examples of products that have been previously produced (knowledge artifacts). Product quality is entirely the responsibility of the craftsman. Craftsmen are aware that product quality is one of the sustainability or binding factors for customers besides the timeliness of order completion. Below are some basic components of initial quality assessment by customers.

Table 3. Components of quality assessment by consumers

No	Reference in Assessing Product Quality	Consumer
1	Crafter's Reputation	Direct User
2	Previous Product Users	Direct User
3	Woven products produced	Shop or Collector

Source: Processed 2023

Second are shops or collectors. Most of the woven products are absorbed by shops or collectors. Shops or collectors have different standards or quality, especially in terms of the characteristics they will highlight. Shops or collectors provide criteria or standards for the products they will accept. Craftsmen who intend to become partners or weaving children of shops or collectors usually offer their weaving products for purchase. Shops or collectors, as consumers, assess the quality of the weaving products as an initial assessment before giving the next order. The quality of the weaving results is not only a craftsman's woven product, but more than that as a representation or illustration of the craftsman's knowledge and skills. Acceptance of the weaving results symbolizes trust in the craftsman's skills by the shop or collector. Next, the shop or collector will provide criteria that become standards so that artisan woven products can be accepted. When making the first order, some shops or collectors carry out indirect supervision through more senior weavers who are close to the craftsmen who work on the first order. Communication is carried out via WhatsApp group. When making the next order, the quality is completely handed over to the craftsman without any supervision from the shop or collector at all.

In the context of product quality, defining knowledge as an object (i.e. valuable information) provides an opportunity to improve knowledge management compared to the work process and motif design. Criteria or quality standards from customers as objects of knowledge can be arranged systematically, formalized, then printed for distribution (transfer), and stored by craftsmen. Apart from that, communication technology (whatsapp group) can also be used in this process.

The role of customers in determining the quality of woven products confirms the dominance of customers as capital as stated by (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). The relationship between craftsmen as producers and customers becomes important in the context of craftsmen's efforts to clearly understand what customers want. The ability to understand customer criteria or qualities as an effort to retain customers as intellectual capital other than people and structure. Craftsmen who have established such relationships have a much higher value than craftsmen who have not established such relationships.

It is true, in the arts and crafts industry, more than in creative industries in general, knowledge analysis and knowledge transfer are important because of their connotation as tacit, although this kind of knowledge is difficult to link to performance outcomes because most of the knowledge exists in the mind of the craftsman as a result of work experience them (Høgseth, 1982). Therefore, it is important to enable and facilitate the transfer of artisan knowledge, as such knowledge becomes a powerful and unique source of organizational performance in the present, enabling arts and crafts organizations to utilize sources of knowledge, traditions (both internal and related, based on the region in which the

organization is located) and the skills of its craftsmen to drive growth and market visibility (Kotlar et al., 2018)

Conclusion

The important role of craftsmen in small and medium enterprises in the field of weaving arts and crafts, whose knowledge and technical skills are highly valued by colleagues, by the market (customers), and in society. Therefore, the knowledge acquired and retained by craftspeople is critical to the long-term survival of arts and crafts organizations and their profitability.

There are limited knowledge management in silungkang weaving due to maintaining its "traditionality" by opening up few opportunities for the use of technology in the weaving process. However, there are opportunities to use and formalize knowledge management for craftsmen and customers in the context of maintaining the quality of woven products. In addition, there is a certain unawareness at the craftsman level regarding the strategic relevance of the knowledge and skills of craftsmen and about how to transfer their knowledge practically and effectively to future generations of young craftsmen to continue to meet unique and exclusive market demands.

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