



SURVIVAL STRATEGY OF KERIS CRAFTSMEN IN AENG TONG-TONG VILLAGE, SARONGGI DISTRICT, SUMENEP REGENCY

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| Article Info | Abstract |
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| Accepted July , 2024 | This study aims to analyze the survival strategies of keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village, Saronggi District, Sumenep Regency. This study uses a qualitative phenomenological method. The selected informants are the keris craftsman coordinator and the owner of the keris craft industry. The data collection techniques used are interviews and documentation in the keris craft industry in Aeng Tong-Tong Village. In this study, data validity testing was used through source triangulation which was then analyzed and conclusions were drawn. The results of the study indicate that the survival strategy of keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village utilizes assets or capital, including human capital, natural capital, financial capital, physical capital and social capital. |
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INTRODUCTION

Keris is one of the characteristics of Indonesian culture that has been recognized by UNESCO as part of the intangible cultural heritage that needs to be preserved. UNESCO announced this in 2005 in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. As a nation that has keris as a cultural heritage, we must maintain and develop keris culture in everyday life.(Yasa et al., 2023).

Keris is a traditional weapon that also has artistic and symbolic value. Each region in Indonesia has different forms, motifs, and meanings of keris. Sumenep Regency is one of the cities known as the center of the largest keris craftsman industry in the world, so UNESCO has designated Sumenep Regency as the "Keris City"(Anekawati et al., 2021).

Sumenep was designated as a keris city due to several factors; first, the tradition of making keris in Sumenep has existed since the kingdom era and still survives to this day. Second, the number of craftsmen (empu) in Sumenep is the largest compared to other areas that produce keris in Indonesia.(Herli et al., 2023).

Keris made by masters in Sumenep are very popular and are not only limited to enthusiasts from Indonesia, but have also reached the international market by being exported to countries such as Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Thailand, the Netherlands and Germany.(Hafidhah et al., 2023). In Sumenep Regency there are 285 craftsmen (empu), Aeng Tong-Tong Village in Saronggi District has the most craftsmen.

Table 1.1Number of Keris Craftsmen in Sumenep Regency

| No | Subdistrict | Village | Number of Keris Craftsmen |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Bluto | Steel Aeng | 68 |
| | | The Palongan | 83 |
| 2 | Saronggi | Gutter | 8 |
| | | Aeng Tong Tong | 126 |
| Amount | | | 285 |

Source: Diskop UMKM Perindag, 2024

Keris crafts are the main livelihood for the people of Aeng Tong-Tong Village. The high demand for keris from within and outside the country affects the number of craftsmen. The large number of craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village has become a national spotlight and has received a record from the Indonesian Record Museum (MURI) as the village with the most craftsmen in the world. Trusted to make souvenir keris to be given to 20 leaders of the G20 participating countries in Bali. Received a UNESCO award with a village that still maintains art and culture, making heirloom keris. Received an award from the Governor of East Java as the Second Best in the Cultural Tourism Attraction Category in the 2018 East Java Tourism Award. In addition, in 2022 Aeng Tong-Tong Village was also named the first winner of the 2022 Indonesian Tourism Village Award (ADWI) in the visitor attraction category by the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy of the Republic of Indonesia. As an effort to encourage economic recovery through village development, in order to create jobs and encourage economic revival.

The industrial sector is a potential sector that plays an important role in economic development in a country. Industry is one of the efforts to improve the welfare of the population. The industrial sector plays a major role in society in Indonesia, thus encouraging various developments in the regions. One of the major roles of industry is to provide jobs to the community. The industrial sector provides opportunities for the community to reduce unemployment and great opportunities in expanding employment and encouraging technological growth and can trigger the growth of other interrelated



sectors such as the trade and service sectors. Industry is a business or activity of managing raw materials or semi-finished goods into finished materials that have added value to gain profit. Assembly or assembling and repair businesses are part of the industry. Industrial results are not only in the form of goods, but also in the form of services (Arnold et al., 2020).

The development of small and medium industries is an effort to improve the economy because of its enormous potential in driving the national economy. Small and medium industries have a large role in the economy because many people depend on SMEs for their livelihoods. Among the small and medium businesses, the keris craft industry in Aeng Tong-Tong Village, Saronggi District, Sumenep Regency is also one of the small industries in Indonesia. The development of the craft industry in Aeng Tong-Tong Village is the keris. This potential cannot be separated from the historical traces that have left their mark on the craft product. The reason is that the keris has been around since the 19th century and was the ultimate weapon for soldiers at that time. Keris is made from basic materials of iron, steel, and pamor materials. Keris is made by forging it repeatedly, then made in layers. At least thousands of layers are needed to create the best quality keris. After the forging process, the making of the keris is continued with the formation of the blade and the kinatah process (iron carving). Then continued with the warangka process or making the keris sheath from wood. Until the final process is coloring or a mixture of arsenic liquid with lime juice which is smeared or dipped into the keris. (Center for Research and Development of Indonesian Culture, 2011). Given the complexity of the process, it is natural that making a keris takes about two to six months. This depends on the complexity of the carvings and the shape of the keris being made.

The center of the keris craft industry in Aeng Tong-Tong Village formed a community called Pelar Agung, this community was created to facilitate communication between craftsmen and this provides an opportunity for keris craftsmen to develop their business. The Pelar Agung Community has 89 members. On the other hand, as an industry that produces similar products, namely keris, it will create competition, in line with research Nurfadhilah & Sri Rahayuningsih, (2021) shows that the keris craft industry in Aeng Tong-Tong Village is approaching a monopolistic competitive market structure. This condition can be seen from the characteristics of this industry, namely the existence of many craftsmen who produce similar products, namely keris.

Production can be defined as the process of changing input or resources into output in the form of goods or services that have added value. The output can be in the form of a finished product or still in the semi-finished stage. Production theory is the study of how entrepreneurs or producers utilize and integrate various production factors with existing technology to produce a certain amount of goods in the most efficient way. The obstacles faced by keris craftsmen are production where the availability of raw materials is limited, equipment is inadequate and knowledge of the production process is lacking. In producing keris, the main capital is the craftsman and is supported by equipment to make keris. In addition, they do not have a business plan in their efforts so that it seems like they are "just going along". It is important to understand how limited resources can be

optimized to achieve maximum results in production (Ramadan et al., 2020). Aeng Tong-Tong Village has achieved achievements at national and international levels but the craftsmen have not received assistance from the village government or the district government even though the people of Aeng Tong-Tong Village have made Sumenep Regency proud several times. And also shipping abroad, where POS as a State-Owned Enterprise has not been able to ship abroad. Meanwhile, craftsmen when receiving orders from abroad must go through a private shipping service, namely vedek located in Surabaya, which has very expensive shipping costs. And until now this shipping problem has not been solved by the Regency Government. From these obstacles, the welfare of the community is hampered. Based on the background of the problem above, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "Survival strategies for keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village, Saronggi District, Sumenep Regency". The importance of this research is to help keris craftsmen deal with problems that occur independently so that keris productivity is higher and can improve the welfare of keris craftsmen.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach because it is more appropriate for revealing the meaning behind the phenomenon. (Sugiyono, 2013). This study focuses more on the survival strategies carried out by keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village, Saronggi District, Sumenep Regency, so that in this study to find the truth in order to find out how the keris craftsmen's survival strategies are, it is necessary to use the phenomenological method. Phenomenological research tries to explain or reveal the meaning of concepts or phenomena of experience based on the awareness that occurs in several individuals.

This research was conducted in Aeng Tong-Tong Village, Saronggi District, Sumenep Regency. The location of this research was chosen because in Aeng Tong-Tong Village, the people work as keris craftsmen, have the most craftsmen among other villages and Aeng Tong-Tong Village is the center of the keris craft industry which has the most craftsmen, the large number of craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village has become a national spotlight and has received a record from the Indonesian Record Museum (MURI) as the village with the most craftsmen in the world.

Informants are determined using purposive sampling techniques, where the technique of taking samples of data sources with certain considerations. These certain considerations, for example, the person who is considered to know the most about what we expect. In this study, the informants were determined to be the coordinator of keris craftsmen and keris craftsmen. Where the coordinator of keris craftsmen and keris craftsmen are seen and considered to know the situation in Aeng Tong-Tong Village the most and can answer the problems of this study.

Data collection techniques in this qualitative research, researchers will collect data through interviews and documentation. This research uses primary and secondary data sources. Data analysis techniques use the interactive analysis model from Miles and Huberman with stages of data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2015). This study conducted a data validity test process by

viewing and checking information obtained from one informant with another. Therefore, the data validity test in this study used a credibility test with source triangulation. Source triangulation is used to test the credibility of data which is done by checking data that has been obtained through several sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to (BPS, 2021) Aeng Tong-Tong Village has a population of 1,381 people with various sources of income or livelihoods. This can be seen from the following table:

Table 1.2 Number of Households in the Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Sectors by Village and Main Business Field 2020

| No | Source of Income | Various Sectors | Amount |
|----|-------------------------|-----------------|--------|
| 1 | Agricultural Sector | Crops | 201 |
| | | Plantation | 73 |
| | | Forestry | - |
| | | Farm | 108 |
| | | Fishery | - |
| 2 | Non-Agricultural Sector | Trading | 27 |
| | | Transport | 5 |
| | | Industry | 104 |
| | | Excavation | - |
| | | Carpentry | 6 |
| | | Service | 13 |

Source: Saronggi District in Figures (BPS, 2021)

It is known that the residents of Aeng Tong-Tong Village utilize part of their area as agricultural and livestock land. In addition to the agricultural sector, the residents of Aeng Tong-Tong Village also work in the non-agricultural sector and the most is in the industrial sector. Industry in the narrow sense refers to all economic activities where humans process raw materials into semi-finished or finished goods that have higher utility value. While in a broader sense, industry includes all productive and commercial economic activities carried out by humans to meet their needs.

Production can be defined as the process of changing input or resources into output in the form of goods or services that have added value. The output can be in the form of a finished product or still in the semi-finished stage. Capital is a fund used to manage and finance routine production activities, both daily and monthly. This fund includes the cost of purchasing the production resources needed to produce a certain output and utilizing existing input. Business capital is the foundation that determines production capacity, without adequate capital the production process can be hampered which will ultimately affect business growth. Raw materials are the main factor in producing a product, these raw materials are a priority in a business which is in the form of raw materials that are processed into a product that has utility value with several processes which will later become output in a production. Raw materials provide positive value for a business, where when raw materials experience a decrease in their stock availability, it will reduce the amount of production in a business. The production process involves processing raw

materials into finished products. Raw materials used in the industry are processed into final products that are ready to use. In Aeng Tong-Tong Village, it is a center for keris crafts where there are many keris craftsman industries there. Even today, keris crafts are the main livelihood for the people of Aeng Tong-Tong Village. Keris is a traditional weapon that is commonly found in various regions in Indonesia and has been an important part of the nation's history and culture since ancient times. The main function of keris is as a means of protection against various types of threats, both physical and non-physical. On the other hand, keris is also known as an object that has important value. This value is reflected in the beauty of the design and materials used as well as the manufacturing process which not only takes a long time but also requires dedication and certain skills. The various levels of keris types can be seen in the following table:

Table 1.3 Various Types of Keris, Time and Price

| NO | Types of Keris | Time required | Price |
|----|----------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Kodhin Keris | 1 day can be 10 blades | 150,000-500,000 |
| 2 | Middle Class Keris | 1 month 2-3 blades | 700,000-1,000,000 |
| 3 | Finely Crafted Keris | 1 month 1 blade | 5,000,000-10,000,000 |
| 4 | Keris Ageman | Uncertain because of using rituals | 15,000,000 |

Source: Primary Data

Survival Strategy of Keris Craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village, Saronggi District, Sumenep Regency.

Survival strategy is the ability possessed by a person to face and solve various problems in his life. This ability is important because it helps individuals to adapt to difficult situations and find effective solutions to the challenges they encounter. Livelihood can be interpreted as a livelihood or concept of livelihood, which is when a person or group of people utilize various resources they have as an effort to meet their needs to improve the quality of life.

Each individual has a different way of life or survival strategy, including for keris craftsmen. This study was conducted to observe how keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village, Saronggi District, Sumenep Regency, maintain their lives. Based on the livelihood framework, DFID, (1999) identified five categories of assets/capital related to Livelihood with the term "pentagonal asset", namely: First, human capital, which refers to education, skills, experience and health. Second, natural capital, which refers to natural resources in the form of land, plants, water. Third, financial capital, which refers to savings in the form of cash, bank deposits, jewelry or livestock. And financial income from various sources such as investment pension funds, and remittances. Fourth, physical capital, which refers to basic infrastructure and production equipment. Fifth, social capital, which refers to the use of family, friends and neighbors in their relationships and social assistance.

Human Capital



Skills are the most important assets owned by keris craftsmen. This emphasizes that in the production process, the main thing is the skills, creativity and energy of the craftsmen themselves. In the process of making keris, the craftsmen do not target like factories/companies. They work according to their desires and personal motivations without any targets to be met. This is because making keris is an art form that requires calm and clarity of mind. If a craftsman feels his mind is not calm or disturbed, it is better not to continue making keris because it can affect the quality of the work results. Therefore, an atmosphere that supports peace of mind and soul is very important in the process of making keris. Keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village generally obtain their skills from generation to generation. In addition, they also receive education about the philosophy and process of making good keris from the Pelar Agung community. Craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village generally have mastered keris making since an early age, this is because they have been trained to help their parents in this craft since they were little. Information obtained from informants, although their main livelihood is as keris craftsmen, they never leave farming, raising livestock and some also open grocery stores. It is known that human capital is the most important thing in producing keris, human resources are basically and fundamentally considered as important subjects. This reflects the individual's capacity to gain increased access to better living conditions. Based on the informant's statement, it is in accordance with the livelihood theory on human capital because it is related to skills and experience. In line with research Putri et al., (2024) shows that in Bontoborusu Village, Selayar Regency, there are various skills such as gardening, culinary, arts, and handicrafts. Gardening skills are the most widely possessed skills, followed by culinary skills.

Natural capital

In Aeng Tong-Tong Village, in addition to the community's livelihood as keris craftsmen, they also do farming activities. Information obtained from informants can be seen that in addition to being keris craftsmen, they also have side jobs. Based on the informant's statement, it is in accordance with the livelihood theory on natural capital because it is related to land and its production, where in this study it is described by informants who use their land to be worked. In line with the research Lestari & Pujihartati, (2023) shows that land is a means owned by farmers to carry out activities to maintain the lives of their families.

Financial Capital

The financial capital owned by keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village comes from making keris and also from side jobs that they do. In the process of making keris, the capital needed for each blade varies depending on the type of keris. The savings owned by keris craftsmen consist of savings in banks, gold, nickel, keris-making tools, and livestock. Information obtained from informants can be seen that the selling price of keris is usually measured by its artistic value, materials, people's pleasure, but from one to another it is impossible to be the same. Some people believe that there is mystical power in keris, so if buyers in the market are happy they are willing to pay a higher price. On the other hand, traders/middlemen are only interested in the resale value. Therefore, when students conduct research on the economy and profits of keris, they find that it

cannot be measured like clothes, because the value of keris is very dependent on the pleasure of the buyer. Which keris is an object that contains elements of culture and sacredness. So in this profit is relative depending on the buyer. Based on this, it is in accordance with the livelihood theory on financial capital (Financial Capital) because it is related to savings/deposits and profits where in this study it is described by the ability of craftsmen to save and make a profit. In line with the research Agustina & Utomo, (2023) shows that the savings owned by salt farmers in Pangarengan Village consist of cash and non-cash, cash savings in the form of money while non-cash savings in the form of gold and ATM accounts.

Physical Capital

Keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village have various personal production tools used to make keris, which include traditional and modern tools. These tools include forges, hacksaws, hammers, chisels, files, grinders, and drills, all of which play a role in the process of making authentic keris. After human resources, equipment is a very important asset in keris making. Equipment supports performance and productivity, allowing work to be done more efficiently and effectively. Without adequate equipment, even the most skilled workforce will not be able to reach their full potential. Therefore, investing in quality equipment is as important as investing in human capital. The lack of assistance, especially in terms of equipment from the government, does not prevent craftsmen from continuing to make keris. Despite the challenges, they remain committed to maintaining the tradition of keris making which is a cultural heritage. Their perseverance and dedication show that the spirit of preserving art and crafts can overcome obstacles and limitations. Based on this, it is in accordance with the livelihood theory on physical capital because it is related to production equipment and technology (traditional and modern). In line with research (2020) shows that farmers in Tonjung Village choose to rent tractors from farmer groups because the price is cheaper than renting from other people.

Social Capital

The social capital owned by keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village is the Pelar Agung community, where this association first aims to preserve the cultural heritage in Aeng Tong-Tong Village because currently we are facing an invasion of foreign culture. It is not easy to maintain the tradition of making keris in this digital era, where even children play with gadgets more often than traditional games such as marbles and so on. Facing this challenge, the community tries to balance the influence of foreign cultures by strengthening our own cultural values. To raise and maintain our cultural wealth. Second, the importance of communication in understanding that making keris is bound to philosophical and historical values that are often not understood by many people. In fact, this is very important in the process of making keris that is in accordance with these values. Third, the keris marketing strategy must be strengthened, which means that in a group when there is a request we can exchange information about what each member has, this is an effective form of communication. By expanding into social media where craftsmen can sell their work individually, it is important that with this community the welfare of members is guaranteed. With this, each member is guaranteed authenticity and avoids fraud on social media. If there is a problem such as a mismatch of goods or goods that are not sent, the association plays an active role in providing assistance. And



also because government assistance cannot be given individually, the community becomes important as a means of distributing assistance that effectively improves the welfare of craftsmen. However, until now the craftsmen have not received assistance from the government.

When craftsmen lack capital, they usually work on making keris owned by their friends. This method allows craftsmen to remain productive and continue to hone their skills despite limited financial resources. And they also take advantage of good relationships with neighbors, friends, and family by borrowing money. This shows how strong social ties can be used to support financial needs. Through this borrowing, they not only strengthen social relationships but also meet their economic needs.. Based on this, it is in accordance with the livelihood theory on social capital because it is related to networks and connections, harmony between neighbors, good relationships with friends, relationships based on mutual trust and mutual support in the form of formal and informal groups. In line with research Kadir et al., (2023) shows that the scavenger group at the Manggala District Final Disposal Site (TPA) in Makassar City has relations with anyone as long as it does not harm other parties. And expects mutually beneficial interactions and builds trust and reciprocal relationships that can strengthen cooperation between fellow scavengers, stall owners, and the community outside the Manggala District TPA.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings in this study, it can be concluded that the survival strategy of keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village, Saronggi District, Sumenep Regency utilizes the five pentagonal assets, as follows:

1. Human capital is considered the most important asset because humans as the main subject play a vital role in managing the other four assets. The expertise, skills, creativity and energy of the keris craftsmen are the most important assets owned to make keris.
2. Natural capital is an asset derived from the abundance of natural resources. It relates to the availability of natural resources that are important and useful for survival, especially as a means for individuals to meet their daily needs. Having resources such as land, plants, and water is part of production capital. Craftsmen utilize natural resources by working the land they have.
3. Financial capital is an asset in the form of funds used for daily activities. There are two main sources of financial capital: first, savings or deposits which include cash, bank deposits, jewelry, or livestock. Second, income obtained from various sources such as pension funds, investments, and remittances. The craftsmen utilize savings/deposits, this is obtained from the profits of running a keris business, when they make a profit they set aside some of their income to be saved as a reserve fund and from these funds are used to make investments by buying livestock, land, gold and tools for production.
4. Physical capital is an important asset in supporting the improvement of service provision to meet the needs of life. Physical capital is divided into two categories,

namely basic infrastructure and production equipment. Because equipment is a very important capital after human capital. Equipment supports performance and productivity, allowing work to be done more efficiently and effectively. Without adequate equipment, even the most skilled workforce will not be able to reach their full potential.

5. Social capital is an asset related to a person's ability to cooperate with other people or groups to achieve goals that are difficult to achieve individually. This aspect involves the use of family, friends and neighbors in their relationships and social assistance, therefore strong values of care and solidarity among the community are important elements that support social assets, especially among keris craftsmen. This can be seen from the close cooperative relationships that exist between craftsmen, both in terms of lending money and in the exchange of work assistance, which shows how important social assets are in maintaining and improving shared welfare.

Based on the findings of this study, the following suggestions can be given: there are recommendations to consider support for keris craftsmen in Aeng Tong-Tong Village. One of the main factors is the provision of adequate equipment, which is an important asset after human resources. Given that the reputation of these craftsmen has reached national and even international levels, it is a priority for the government to immediately provide the necessary assistance. And the government immediately provides a solution regarding the shipping of keris abroad, thus, further steps can be taken to improve welfare and maintain the glory of Sumenep keris on the global stage.

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