

Transmission of Pattern Creation Process for Karen Woven Fabrics Using Packaging  
Nongnoot Nathibayapthis<sup>1\*</sup>, Nuttapong Pongka<sup>1</sup>, Pongnarin Pimpisan<sup>1</sup>, Kriengkrai  
Danai<sup>1</sup>, Padoongkuan Mooncome<sup>1</sup>, Thumnong Wongkanya<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Packaging and Printing Technology. Faculty of Arts and Architecture. Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna

<sup>2</sup>Ban paloa School. Tumbol Takad. Mea-tha District. Lamphun Province. Thailand.

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**Abstract :** This research aimed to define Karen's identity of hand woven fabric by using packaging to create and increase a contemporary economic image. Participants in this research were 20 volunteers from Karen's hand woven club in Takad-north village, Mea-Tha district, Lumphun province. The research used focus group methodology to create patterns using theory of Identity, symbolic and packaging design. Data from participated Karens were analyzed descriptively in terms of theory and packaging.

The findings : Pattern of karen weaving related to important particularities "Identity, Myth-Ritual and symbolic of life maintained in the hand woven fabric".

Firstly, symbolic red color related to powerful mind, honesty, attraction and happiness; symbolic white color related to simplicity and sufficient life style of forests and water infrastructure; and symbolic black color related to fright, ghost and family responsibilities.

Secondly, belief and doctrines of ethic Karen literature to oral tradition have a unique identity. Analysis of research participants who engaged with the new patterns on packaging design like folding cartons packaging, shopping bag and wrapping paper showed the use of contemporary economic image in community and cultural capital of the Karen ethnic identity.

**Keywords :** Create, Patterns, Karen woven, Transmission, Packaging

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\*Corresponding author : [nongnootnathi@gmail.com](mailto:nongnootnathi@gmail.com) Tel. 081 7647759

## 1. Introduction

Materialism and progress socialization through generations of Karen Ethnic has made their social and economic lives broader. But protection is needed so that they can be prepared to accept progress and changes in their lives. Knowledge and preservation of their traditional way of weaving fabric by hand can increase the value of their products which, in turn, will increase their income by utilizing packaging business. Watt Thabungkarn (2552) stated that, for research to be successful, the local community must be involved so as to activate them for self-improvement in the community, as well as to have a social network for community practice. There must be exchange of knowledge and innovation so that local knowledge and customs can be passed on to the next generation known as innovation process. Only then that problems arise in the present time could be solved and there will be progress in economic activity in the local community. According to the theory of Talcott Parson (1902-1979) and Jergent Harbermarsh (1902-the present time), there must be a basis for pragmatist; such as Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, Latency, Culture and Latency, Social and Integrations, Physical surroundings and Adaptation and Character and Goal Success. Work through knowledge comes from an exchange of ideas through human dialogue, utilizing symbol used for communications. In communications (Marshall -1998, 131-132) free exchange of ideas and the communicating process produces knowledge. Searching for knowledge by thinking reasonably produces rationality. Capitalist society destroys the human character as it weakens local culture. We must use rationality to explain social appeal and human relationship because human beings do not have relationship through reasoning. Human beings are interested in knowledge (cognitive interest) in 3 ways: technical interest, practical interest and emancipator interest to release them from entrapment of public communications and for them to understand analysis of a variety of cultural aspect.

In cultural aspect of Karen costume, Prayut Wongpaeng (2549) said that it is used to cover the body, to identify the tribe, and to show their economic standard. Knowledge of the hand-woven fabric of the Karen sends the spirit of their ancestors through their hand-weaving and their costumes – such as “*se-ngor*” a white ankle-long dress for girls and waist-length red shirt for boys and “*Se-su*” a black shirt with millet seeds grown in the rice fields for married women. “*Nee-khi*” means a sarong for married women. “*cyee-bi*” means black arm-band for all Karen women and “*khori-bi*” means a black cloth wrapped around the ankle for women. Hand-woven Karen fabric by signatories to the identity of Karen wisdom takes months to weave. “*Na-ti*” which means earrings and “*phae*” which means necklace of multi-coloured millet seeds are decorations for the women.

Concerning Karen cultural beliefs aspect, Prompon Sampanthanoe, president of the Karen Association, presents concept of cultural aspect that culture and hand-woven fabrics are combined together. The dead must wear clothes from the family members for burial. “*Ta-swar-koe*” means a place in an empty area while “*cemetery*” means space that is outside the village area. Phitsanoot Chalernlertwattanukul, president of Lersaw Tourism Group, uses cultural tourism, such as cultural costumes and tribal music, to preserve their culture indirectly. Nongnoot Nathipayapthit (2554)

found that food packaging comes from the knowledge base of the Karen community through hexagon wickerwork products design. According to the Karen, there are 33 Morales but 6 of the beliefs are the most important and these make them healthy and strong. These consist of the head, 2 ears, 2 eyes, and a mouth. All these are Voluntaristic theory: happiness in work, to earn money, and to make merit. They believe that red color brings progress and stability, success and strength. White color represents purity and black color represents evil. The Karens believe that “*Err-thar*” means the basic rule to teach about natural sound, different voice tones of girls and boys, and the sound of happiness or sorrow joined with music and “*the-na*”.

Suwichan Pattanapaiwan and his group (2554) researched the Karen community of Ban Chan and took “*Err-thar*” and songs about life, “*Pa-kayaw*” to sing. His idea is that former Karen knowledge called Karen Pa-kayaw, such as costume-weaving, herbs and the-na music tells us about their way of life.

An old man, *Padi-kyaw-neo-doe-shaw* said that there is more “*Err-thar*” than there are leaves in the jungle and that people can imagine and create music from it; such as “*Khan-toke-err Nang-kataek-ni kataek noon*”.

*Por-lay-par* and Wisarak Yotrabam (2538) said that: “today, the lion is searching for food; this month, the lion is searching for food. Man should not go alone; an animal should not go alone; if you carry the basket, you should listen to the sound of coughing and sneezing”

As for the increasing and developing aspect, Weerasak Joondalai and others (2550) said that to increase knowledge of “*Thai-song*” weaving at Nakhon Phanom Province, they started the development of cultural products such as “*La-kor-poon-jay*”(square pillow), “*La-kor-pai-jay*”(triangular pillow), “*Cher*”(blanket), “*Pray-cya-nown*”(bed-sheet), “*Ja-kart-mee*”(mud-mee cloth), “*Pray-ta-long*” (pha-kha-mar), “*Pray-cap*” (shoulder cloth with “*yok-dok weaving*” designs) and “*Pray-joob-kree-am*” (indigo-blue cotton).

Obviously, each tribal group thinks and transfers their beliefs. They develop their present knowledge continuously to develop preservation of their economy and their social community, so that it becomes their community practice. Karen hand-weaving knowledge will develop packaging and will connect to their tribal generations. And their cultural capital will bring them income from their knowledge of hand-woven fabrics. From all these, the researchers use the Identity ethnic Karen Cognitive hand-weaving knowledge as the base for creative participatory process to community practice. To produce packaging from “*Err-thar*”, doctrine of the Karen said that, “*one strand does not make a shirt; people must have relatives*”, and “*old house will break down; an old shelter will break down; when mother dies, cut her ear and keep it; when father dies, cut his tongue and keep it*”. These are words to remember and listen to. The ear is mother and the tongue is father, whether he/she is old or dead. Ideology, “the Karen women weave fabric from birth to death, is the identity, belief and nature of the Karen.” This is the basis that the researchers used to study the pattern of hand-woven fabric of the Karen as well as to create modern packaging with contemporary image in the community economics through Participatory Action Research (PAR).

## 2. Research Methodology

The research and development method used was Participatory Action Research (PAR) of 20 Karen household volunteers at North Thakad village, Mea-Tha District, Lumphun province, and 10 other people who are designers, community leaders and packaging experts; hence, a total of 30 people. They hold group discussions, personal specific interviews and group workshops regarding patterns identity of Karen ethnic hand-woven fabric products and business income for the community through packaging. Analyses concerned with knowledge, theory and results of Participatory Action Research (PAR), personal interviews and group discussions to produce packaging design for Karen products, as well as identity, symbolic and pattern design Theory, as shown in Figure 1.





**Figure 1.** Participatory Action Research (PAR) through interviews and group discussions to produce designs and patterns to collocate on the packaging for Karen hand-made weaving products, North thakard, Ban Thar District, Lamphun Province.

### 3. Results and Discussion

**Part 1 :** The study found that Karen hand-woven fabrics is based on beliefs, tales and doctrine, Myth–Ritual practices, life in the jungle and rice-farming. It also found that this tie continued through-out their whole lives from birth to death, as follows:

1.) Belief in "Ta-kwar-koe" which means that the dead must wear clothes made by family members so that he can be buried at "Ta-kwar-koe" (an empty space outside the village). They believe that the red colour symbolizes the Karen tribe. This colour will appear on all their clothes. Red colour symbolizes strength, warrior, loyalty to family and village. White colour symbolizes purity, sufficiency in way of life in the jungle and river. Black colour symbolizes fear, spirits, responsibility or having a family.

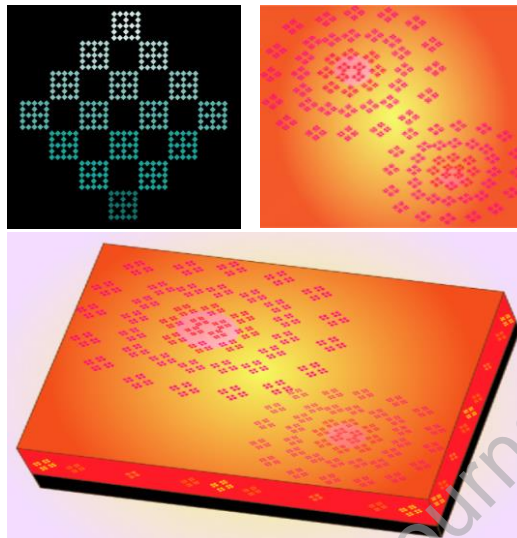
2. Belief from tales based on "*Err-thar*" which is a story of the Karens. It said that "only one strand does not make a shirt, so people must have relatives"

The researchers have brought the beliefs of "*Ta-kwar-koe*", "colour" and "*Err-thar*" as characteristic symbols of the Karen that connects them to the pattern designs of their hand-woven fabrics.

**Part 2 :** The process of Creative packaging through analysis of contemporary image of the community and work-shops conducted with the Karen to produce new designs for use in graphic designing on the packaging through their original culture that is characteristic of the Karen Ethnic consists of :

1. Placement of the graphic on folding box
2. Placement of the graphic on shopping bag
3. Placement of the graphic on wrapping paper

The process of characteristic Karen hand-woven graphic designs to be placed on the packaging through Participatory Action Research is shown in Figures 2-4.



**Figure 2.** Process through characteristic Karen hand-woven graphic design to be placed on Folding box.



**Figure 3.** Process through characteristic Karen hand-woven graphic design to be placed on Shopping bag.





**Figure 4.** Process through characteristic Karen hand-woven graphic design to be placed on Wrapping paper.

The results of Participatory Action Research (PAR) is to use the characteristics of Karen hand-woven fabric and the process of group activity through Community Practice and to produce packaging which characterizes original Karen design through knowledge based on Karen beliefs. The first pattern, Plain weave, combined with the second pattern, Twin weave and Satin weave, are derived from pigs, chickens, flowers, trees, millet seeds, streams, mountains and people. This increases the value from the philosophical ideas of the Karen. It symbolizes and characterizes the design according to their way of life. This symbolic fabric design consists of 2 pieces, both of which are referred to by Viroon Tangchalern (2530), symbolized by "Ideogram and Pictogram", "Visual Form", "Character", "Attract attention" and "True & Contrast". The packaging is characteristic of the Karen hand-woven fabric to extend and enlarge their business community and Pilot Project. This will become a master model for new ideas to develop new creations for the Karen community as shown in Figure 5. This is the result of knowledge by the Karen group at North Thakad village, Mea-Tha District, Lumphun province.



**Figure 5.** Diagram participatory research the Karen of North Thakad village, Mea-Tha District, Lumphun province.

#### 4. Conclusion

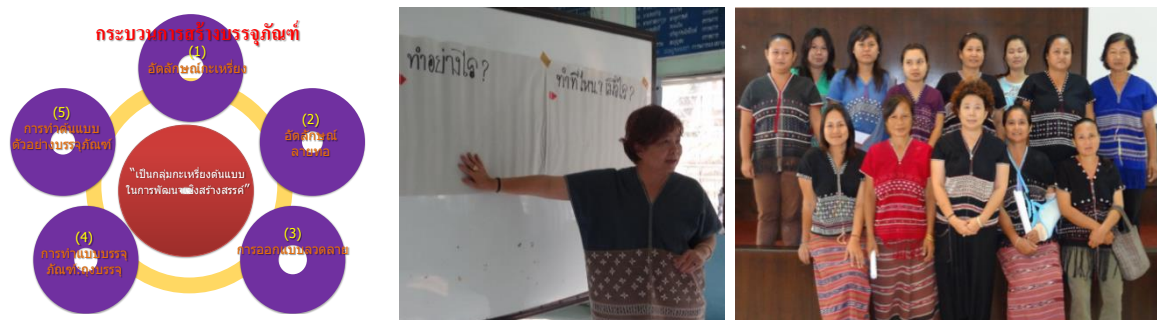
1. The characteristics of the Karen costume, clothes and items that they use tell us that they are a tribe that symbolizes the belief in spirits of their ancestors who protect the village.

2. The characteristics of the Karen hand-made fabric tells the story of the “Myth-Ritual” of their way of life in the jungle, rice-farming livelihood and is connected to their woven fabric from birth to death. In particular, their belief that the dead must wear clothes made by family members for burial at “*Ta-kwar-koe*” or an empty space outside of the village, and that red, white and black are characteristics that will appear on their clothes to symbolize strength, loyalty, purity, family responsibility as well as doctrine. “*Err-thar*” means that one strand does not make a shirt, so people must have relatives.

3. Packaging that has original cultural capital shows and symbolizes the character of the Karen hand-woven fabric. This makes business in the community through the process of Participatory Action Research (PAR). Three types of designs placed on the packaging are: Folding box, Shopping bag and Wrapping paper.

4. Karen Community Practice uses this model as an example of Participatory Action Research (PAR) processing for the first: Karen identity; second: Karen woven identity; third: pattern design; fourth: packaging design; and fifth: packaging design prototype, as shown in Figure 6.





**Figure 6.** The Pilot Karen Community Practice at North Thakad village, Mea-Tha District, Lumphun province, uses this Participatory Action Research (PAR) as a model the participatory process. The first: Karen identity, second: Karen pattern identity, third: pattern design, fourth: packaging design, fifth: packaging prototype.

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