

# Exploring Indigenous Material of Thorny Pandanus Pangandaran as Indonesian Traditional Craft in the Creative Context

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**Abstract:** The creative industry is a mainstay of supporting the national economy. The novelty in the finding of this research is that the people's product taste generally becomes the main consideration in the creative context aspect in the current and future creative industries, which includes the development of product design, along with its economic projections, and additionally the Indonesian aesthetic characters integrated into traditional craft products that have sociological impact. The scope of this research is the development of creative products such as design, production, effective technology, distribution and marketing, management of indigenous renewable raw materials based on natural environment tourism on the coast of the southern coastal area of Pangandaran. The focus is on exploring the indigenous thorny pandanus material as material for the development of traditional craft products in the Pangandaran tourism area. The applied creative design methods with explorative and experimental creative process and design of creative economic products. The aim is to realize eco-design ideas and concepts by capturing potential natural resources, crafters as human resources of home industry, and Pangandaran tourism as a representation of the national creative industry cluster, which enhances the competitiveness of superior national creative products through expanding national and international market access.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the book entitled "The Science of Art and Design", published by the Faculty of Art and Design of Bandung Institute of Technology (B. Anas, 2010), it is stated that design is a scientific phenomenon that grows along with the development of design as an object of study. In its scientific studies, design does not only observe design objects as functional objects, but also probes further by placing them as meaningful objects. Gradually, in line with the scientific developments and research programs, design science has established itself as a new science that has its own epistemology.

As the level of education becomes higher, design is no longer only seen as a specific object of study. It is drawn into a broader area of cultural studies, namely as a region of visual culture studies. In a macro understanding, visual culture is a form of tangible and visible human work. In a specific understanding, it is a form of visual work that becomes an integral part of modern human life and its value sys-

tem. In addition to historical studies, especially observations of the dynamics of Indonesian culture, it also extends to observe the phenomenon of the development of modern design. The main issues that are the focus of study and thoughts in design science and visual culture include the development of design theories, the development of design methodologies, the development of basic science in the field of design, cross-disciplinary studies between design and other fields, visual language with various aspects, design history and visual culture in general, social impact of design works, design strategies, design and development, and development of futuristic designs. As a relatively new scientific domain, scientific studies of design and visual culture have enabled efforts to study and explain various phenomena in contemporary culture that have developed in the community. In addition, it has examined the developing Indonesian and foreign visual culture. The condition has been triggered by the widespread of the visual civilization over the past few decades which was built by information and communication technology, thus

the exploration of visual culture is no longer limited to something visible, but it also covers ideology, values, and the mentality of the practitioners. Since creative craft industry is the research object, the industry has the potential to be developed, considering that this industry has extensive resources and also a production mechanism that encourages high demand for the needs of creativity and character in the craft, design, and tourism entrepreneurship. This research covers the development of knowledge of creative design products such as design, production, effective technology, distribution and marketing, and management of indigenous renewable raw materials, based on the local natural (tourism) area. Along the coast of southern Pangandaran Regency, wild thorny pandanus plants grows. Thus the focus of this research lies in exploring the indigenous renewable material for the development of traditional craft products in Pangandaran tourism area, towards the realization of regional superior products in creative context and increasing the welfare of local tourism crafters and souvenir traders, as well as increasing regional original income with regional superior products characterized by the cultural identity of Pangandaran tourism.

## 2 PANGANDARAN AND THE POTENTIAL OF THORNY PANDANUS

Pangandaran is known as one of the famous tourist destinations in West Java that has the potential of natural marine resources. Southern Pangandaran has a coastal area of 91 km, and the wild thorny pandanus grows along 41.85 km of the southern coast region. Hence, the focus of this research is on exploring the indigenous thorny pandanus as materials for developing traditional craft products in the Pangandaran tourism area towards the realization of superior products regions as well as the increasing welfare of local tourism crafters and souvenir traders, that also adds to the regional income, with regional superior products specific to the cultural identity of Pangandaran tourism (H. Hendriyana, 2019).

The thorny pandanus plants (Figure 1) have the potential to be used as raw materials for craft products, as well as regional superior products that can support tourism in the Pangandaran Regency. Pandanus leaves can be used as raw material for products such as mats, sandals, bags, boxes, and wallets (Figure 2). One example of superior product supporting Pangandaran tourism is hotel sandals. Using the abundant raw materials, trained local crafters can real-

ize the advantages of quality and sustainable products. The rationale is through the cooperation between the academic sector, the craftsmen community, hoteliers, local traders and exporters, and the government as policy and regulation makers. The local government requires the hotels to purchase or distribute products (hotel slippers) made by local artisans. Moreover, thorny pandanus fibers can be used for composite building materials, such as Asbestos, GRC (Glass-fiber Reinforced Cement) with several variants (GRC Panel, GRC Cladding, GRC Jali, GRC Reinforced, GFRC (Glass Fiber Reinforced Concrete), etc.) and also interior body kit for cars, trains, and motorized tourist boats or canoes.



Figure 1: Thorny pandanus plants in Pangandaran Regency.

## 3 PURPOSE

The objectives of this research include: (a) Realizing eco-design ideas and concepts by capturing the potentials of natural resources, human resources for home industry craftsmen, and Pangandaran tourism as a representation of the national creative industry cluster; (b) Designing a method and a creative process model in realizing environmentally friendly and superior local products based on thorny pandanus fiber that support sustainable tourism and the economy of

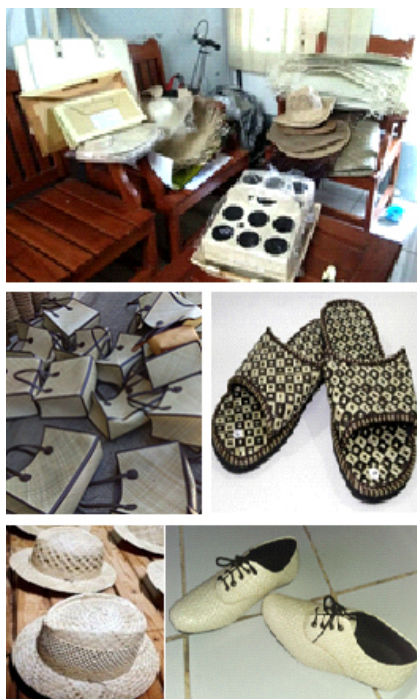


Figure 2: Similar craft products that are competitors for woven pandanus products, to anticipate plagiarism, including: hats by Japanese craftsmen, hotel sandals, laced shoes, and by local craftsmen.

communities in Pangandaran; (c) Strengthening and applying product development methodologies in the scale of Small and Medium Industries oriented to the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) that prioritize creativity and effective technology in the production process; (d) Designing joint commitments from various related elements in realizing regional superior products, economic welfare of the local community, and increasing regional income added value from the creative and tourism industry sectors in Pangandaran; and (e) Increasing the competitiveness of national superior creative products through the expansion of national and international market access.

#### 4 METHODOLOGY

The applied creative design methods (Hendriyana, 2018), and (Lawson, 1980) with explorative and experimental creative process and design of creative economic products are as follows: (a) Revitalization of creative products by analyzing the potential of creative products in the research area, identifying creative products according to market needs in the Pangandaran region as a tourism city, and developing the creative product and transferring of technology from

traditional to simple machine technology; (b) Development of traditional craft products into contemporary products based on cultural identity by analyzing market potential and identifying consumer lifestyles, and re-conceptualizing the aesthetics of contemporary products based on national/international market reputation; and (c) Rebrand of superior products towards the development of national superior product concepts.

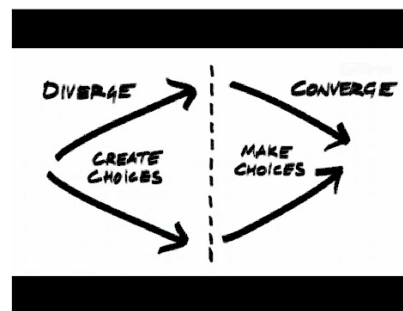


Figure 3: Creative process elaborates diverge and converge ways of thinking.

#### 5 VALUES

The economic potential of the products include: (1) the product variations in line with the development of people’s lifestyles; (2) fulfillment of the segmentation of new market shares in various craft and hotel markets; (3) the shift from traditional home industry technology towards simple industrial machinery through research on the feasibility and strength of thorny pandanus fibers as renewable material that can be used as fiber materials for products of car interior body, rock climbing clothes, and other clothing products such as pray mats, bags, slippers, mats, and so on.

The added value of the products to science, technology and art include: (1) development of appropriate design/craft knowledge for Small and Medium Industries (SMIs); (2) resulting an appropriate method for the development of SMIs, both in terms of technology, design, work procedures, and market development which will be applied in relatively the same conditions in other regions; (3) improvement of design quality.

The national social impacts include: (1) an increase in design and quality insights for craftsmen and entrepreneurs; (2) the development and maintenance of the potential of regional socio-culture that has nuances of Indonesian culture.

Efforts to strengthen cultural heritage identity include: (1) increasing the understanding of user char-

acteristics when interacting with creative products that have cultural content, through revitalizing traditional craft regions as an effort to increase cultural identity in eco-design contexts for creative economy-based industrial clusters (contemporary craft products made of pandanus fiber); and (2) demonstrating the distinctiveness of craft products as unique products and have a different visual application background from other regions.

## 6 DESIGN IN THE CONTEXT OF USEFULNESS AND CREATIVITY

The elaboration on the philosophy of design in the context of usefulness rests on the socio-historical point of view of the field of design that relates to the field of philosophy. This research did not try to explain the linkages between the theories of the two fields—even though there are linkages, it requires intensive study—instead, it sought to explain the connection of substantial conceptual phenomena as a meeting point between the two fields of science.

It starts with an understanding of the world of design which is not only appreciating design works as mere artifacts, but it is also an integrated view that covers cultural values and thoughts, and the accompanying socio-economic changes. Design is not a stand-alone product, but it is a living order of civilization. Even historians argue that design is an integrated and synergistic form of humans, nature, and social environment in a broad and substantial sense (Walker, 1989).

Design is inseparable from the aspect of creativity as the spearhead of design. Substantively, it cannot be separated from human ideas, namely elements of reason (ratio, logic, thoughts, ideas, and so on) and elements of taste (creativity, intuition, inspiration, taste, value-values, and so on). In viewing the current development of design and creativity, there has been an established mutualistic relationships, namely as an order of physical cultural works, which are born from various considerations of thoughts, ideas, tastes, and souls of the designers, and they are supported by external factors concerning discoveries in science, technology, art, social environment, values, culture, aesthetic rules, economic and political conditions, as well as projections of future developments. Its role is increasingly important in the order of physical cultural work, especially to support creative economic growth and increase the quality of human life.

On one hand, when referring to efforts in applying

innovative approaches of design to that produce innovative products, then design innovation in the context of creativity is the solution to the deadlock of creativity. This design innovation is based on exploration activities on the superiority and uniqueness of indigenous materials and design ideas to be developed into products that have originality and new function values. On the other hand, the world of creativity indicates the convergence of concepts and practices from creative design works, originating from individual talents collaborating with cultural industries on a large scale through the use of new technological media in the digital era which is a new economic knowledge as a way of using new interactive media in the consumer community. The emergence of this new-faced world of creativity is a result of changes in the global technological and economic fields and the widespread use of various forms of interactive media (such as high-capability computers), as well as commercial exploitation of IPR-based goods and services. In short, design is a modern object culture. In essence, it is built by involving aspects of human images in viewing the world, mastery of technology, understanding of science, and aesthetic values. Starting from creative images, humans build their world—with the support of science, technological proficiency, and tangible aesthetic values—into products that are functionally useful, and meaningful in human civilization ((A. Sachari, 1999) and (Sunarya, 2014)).

## 7 CURRENT AND FUTURE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

The creative industry in Indonesia is one of the mainstays that is expected to support the national economy (Pangestu, 2008). At present, the creative industries, especially small industries, are the one that empowers the most workers, which utilize local natural resources, and national cultural wealth, so that its development deserves attention. The products produced by small industries now have relatively short and fast changing life cycles. Therefore, a strategy model is needed in developing new designs. This is one of the keys that becomes the strength of the national creative industry to be able to have excellent competitive power in the national and regional markets. In developing an accurate product development strategy, all elements must be assessed on the basis of the goals and objectives. Another element is the control function that identifies the phenomena of global change and development. This function must work responsively and quickly in informing processed data in evaluating the strategy. Thus, as a designer, it

is necessary to strategize by adopting a design concept with an interactive-participatory approach (Hendriyana, 2017).

The development of design in creative industries is related to the development of culture in the visual culture setting, coupled with the increasingly widespread claims of ownership of designs. Design innovation in product diversification with applied local wisdom as a cultural heritage step is to become the basis for exploring and implementing local-based designs. In general, it is said that there are still weaknesses in the craftsmen's competency level due to: (a) the quality of production, the lack of visual appeal/design and quality; (b) lack of the ability to read the market situation; and (c) competitors of similar small industries. Thus, an aspect that must be improved in this case is the ability of the craftsman to be able to carry out production techniques in terms of the production process and design improvements, and to diversify their products through creative capabilities.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

Exploring the indigenous material of Thorny Pandanus Pangandaran as Indonesian Traditional Craft in The Creative Context is a design strategy that has aspects of design innovation in its implementation related to the current and future creative industries including the development of product design, along with economic projections. In general, the products of public taste are the main consideration, in addition to the Indonesian aesthetic character is sought to be an integrated part of the product which has a sociological impact.

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