



Transforming traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs into creative products: a qualitative study of cultural transmission and heritage sustainability

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the transformation of traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs into creative products as an entry point for cultural heritage revitalization within a heritage based creative economy framework. It examines motif transformation as a multi level process linking changes in cultural knowledge, design adaptation, and cultural ecosystem revitalization. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, visual documentation, and literature review in Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City, involving 25 purposively and snowball-selected informants. Data were analyzed through open coding, constant comparison, and thematic interpretation based on heritage revitalization, cultural sustainability, and the heritage-based creative economy. Results indicate that transformation is driven not only by design innovation but also by weakening intergenerational knowledge transmission, shifting motifs from cultural meaning systems into fragmented visual resources. Motif adaptation remains non-standardized and highly dependent on individual initiatives. The study proposes a five-stage revitalization model linking documentation, design transformation, product innovation, artisan regeneration, and pentahelix ecosystem strengthening for cultural sustainability.



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1. Introduction

The diverse products of traditional culture are dynamic resources that must not only be preserved but also developed to remain relevant in the modern era. Cultural heritage has the potential to generate social, cultural, and economic value through processes of reinterpretation, adaptation, and innovation without losing its inherent identity and meaning [1]. This paradigm illustrates that the sustainability of cultural heritage is determined not only by the existence of artifacts but also by their ability to adapt to social and economic changes and the needs of society [2], [3]. Therefore, revitalization is an effort to revive the function, meaning, and relevance of culture through various forms of sustainable creative utilization. Traditional carving is a form of cultural heritage that faces complex sustainability challenges. Threats to the sustainability of traditional carving include not only physical damage to artifacts, but also the weakening of intergenerational knowledge transmission systems, the decline or cessation of the next generation of carvers, changes in people's lifestyles, and the waning interest of younger generations in traditional culture. Various studies indicate that the greatest challenges facing cultural heritage today lie in the fragility of skill-transmission mechanisms, the disconnect between tradition and modern life, and the dwindling number of heirs willing to continue traditional craft practices [4], [5], [6], [7], [8], [9]. Consequently, there are craft artifacts that still survive physically but have lost their social function, educational value, and cultural relevance.

To ensure the sustainability of these carvings, conservation alone is insufficient; a revitalization strategy is needed that can link the preservation and development of traditional carvings with the needs of today's society. Traditional Kerinci woodcarving is one such cultural heritage facing these challenges. These carvings are found on *Rumah Larik* (traditional *Kerinci* houses), *Bilik Padi* (rice barns), and ancient mosque, which form an important part of the cultural landscape of the *Kerinci* people [10], [11], [12]. The motifs are dominated by stylized flora in the form of vines and geometric shapes. Currently, there are no longer any centers for traditional carving, and traditional carved buildings are becoming rare, causing this traditional carving art to become increasingly marginalized. The main challenge faced is not only the physical preservation of the carvings but also maintaining their relevance and sustainability within the context of contemporary society.

One emerging approach in the study of cultural heritage is revitalization through the transformation of cultural elements into creative products. In this approach, cultural heritage is not merely preserved as an object of conservation but is also utilized as a source of inspiration for the development of products that possess economic value and social relevance. The transformation of traditional motifs into various creative products allows cultural values to be passed down while creating new economic opportunities for the community. This approach aligns with the concepts of heritage revitalization, cultural sustainability, and the heritage based creative economy, which position cultural heritage as a source of innovation and economic value creation [3], [13]. The incorporation of traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs, as a manifestation of this transformation process, is beginning to emerge through their application in contemporary products. Adaptations of traditional carving motifs such as the *Rumah Larik*, *Bilik Padi*, and ancient mosque include the use of the *Incung* script (traditional *Kerinci* script) as a batik motif, as well as the application of carving motifs on various contemporary wood products and souvenirs. Nevertheless, research explaining how carving motifs are transformed into creative products as a strategy for revitalizing cultural heritage remains relatively limited. Given these circumstances, there are three research gaps. First, research on traditional *Kerinci* carvings remains limited, consisting primarily of documentary and historical studies, while strategies for transforming motifs into creative products that preserve cultural identity have yet to be identified. Second, research on culture based creative economies tends to focus on the creation of economic value but has not adequately explained how the adaptation of traditional motifs contributes to the revitalization of cultural heritage. Third, the relationship between cultural heritage revitalization, cultural sustainability, and the development of creative products has not yet been thoroughly examined, particularly regarding how cultural value can be preserved when traditional motifs are adapted into contemporary products. Given this gap, this study adopts a theoretical framework situated at the intersection of heritage revitalization, cultural sustainability, and the heritage based creative economy. It is based on the assumption that the sustainability of cultural heritage is achieved not only through physical conservation but also through the community's ability to transform cultural elements into forms relevant to contemporary needs without losing their cultural identity.

This study raises three questions: (1) what values are embodied in the carving motifs; (2) how can these motifs be transformed into creative products without losing their cultural identity; and (3) what revitalization strategies can support the sustainable development of creative products based on cultural heritage? In line with these questions, this study aims to analyze the cultural values contained in traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs, identify the potential and challenges of their transformation into creative products, and analyze revitalization strategies that support the development of a creative economy based on cultural heritage. The contribution of this research lies in its empirical explanation of the transformation of traditional carving motifs into creative products as a strategy for revitalizing cultural heritage. The study highlights that carving motifs can be adapted into contemporary creative products without losing their cultural identity. Theoretically, this study enriches the field of heritage revitalization and cultural sustainability by demonstrating that cultural sustainability can be achieved through creative adaptation that links the preservation of cultural values with the creation of economic value. Furthermore, this study contributes to the literature on the heritage based creative economy, where traditional carving motifs can serve as a source of design innovation

and community based product development. This study provides an empirical explanation of the relationship between cultural heritage revitalization, cultural sustainability, and the development of the creative economy through the transformation of traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to analyze the transformation of traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs into creative products, as well as strategies for revitalizing cultural heritage that support the development of a culture based creative economy. The case study design was chosen because it allows for an in depth exploration of the relationship between cultural values, motif transformation practices, sustainability challenges, and revitalization strategies within a specific sociocultural context. The research analysis covers traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs, the process of their transformation into creative products, and the revitalization strategies developed by cultural practitioners and stakeholders. The research was conducted in *Kerinci* Regency and *Sungai Penuh* City, *Jambi* Province, *Indonesia*. The first phase of the study will take place from July 2024 to December 2024, and the second phase from July to December 2025. The research sites included: (a) five *Rumah Larik* and five *Bilik Padi* in *Sungai Penuh*, *Lempur*, *Semurup*, and *Siulak*; (b) four ancient mosque, namely the *Masjid Agung Pondok Tinggi*, the *Masjid Keramat Pulau Tengah*, the *Masjid Keramat Lempur*, and the *Masjid Lamo Lempur*; (c) two woodcarving workshops in *Penawar* and *Pondok Tinggi*; (d) and five *batik* centers in *Sungai Penuh*, *Pondok Tinggi*, *Rawang*, and *Siulak*. These locations were selected purposefully because they represent the two main contexts of the research, cultural heritage as a source of traditional motifs and creative economic practices as a space for transforming motifs into creative products.

The study included 25 participants selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. They consisted of five heirs of *Rumah Larik*, four managers of ancient mosque, five traditional leaders, five batik artisans, four academics, and two representatives from government agencies responsible for culture, tourism, and the creative economy. The selection of participants was based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in the preservation, development, and utilization of traditional *Kerinci* woodcarving. Snowball sampling was used to identify additional informants based on recommendations from key informants. Data collection was halted upon reaching thematic saturation, when additional interviews no longer yielded new information relevant to the research focus. Data was collected through semi structured interviews, field observations, visual documentation, and a literature review. Interviews were conducted using a guide consisting of 8–15 open ended questions grouped into four main themes: (1) the cultural values and symbolic meanings of traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs; (2) challenges in preserving and sustaining the carving tradition; (3) the transformation of motifs into contemporary creative products; and (4) strategies for revitalizing cultural heritage that support the development of the creative economy. The interviews lasted 45–120 minutes, were recorded with the participants' consent, and were subsequently transcribed verbatim. Observations were conducted at traditional *Rumah Larik*, *Bilik Padi*, ancient mosque, woodcarving workshops, and batik centers to examine the characteristics of motifs, craftsmanship techniques, preservation conditions, and the adaptation of motifs in creative products. Visual documentation was carried out through photographs of motifs, production processes, and relevant creative products. The literature review included scientific articles, books, policy documents, cultural heritage inventories, archives, and previous research related to traditional carving, cultural heritage revitalization, and the creative economy.

The data analysis is guided by three theoretical perspectives: (1) heritage revitalization; (2) cultural sustainability; (3) and the heritage based creative economy. The heritage revitalization perspective is used to understand how traditional motifs are adapted and utilized in contemporary products. The cultural sustainability perspective is used to analyze the sustainability of the cultural values, identities, and knowledge embodied in carving motifs. Meanwhile, the heritage based creative economy perspective is used to explain the relationship

between cultural preservation and the creation of economic value through the development of creative products.

The analysis was conducted thematically in four stages. First, all interview data, observation notes, visual documentation, and literature sources were compiled into a single research database. Interview transcripts and field notes were read repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the data. Second, open coding was performed on units of meaning related to cultural values, sustainability challenges, forms of motif transformation, product innovation, institutional support, and economic opportunities. Third, codes with commonalities were grouped into categories using the constant comparison technique, which involves comparing data across participants and sources to identify consistent patterns. Fourth, these categories were interpreted using the research's theoretical framework to generate key themes explaining the relationship between motif transformation, cultural heritage revitalization, and creative economy development. A theme was established if the same pattern consistently emerged across various participant groups and was supported by more than one data source. The analysis yielded three main themes: (1) the cultural value and symbolic meaning of motifs; (2) the transformation of carving motifs into creative products and the challenges involved; and (3) strategies for revitalizing cultural heritage through the development of the creative economy. The revitalization strategy was formulated inductively based on empirical findings through four steps. First, all findings related to barriers to preservation and sustainability were grouped into a "challenges" category. Second, findings related to cultural resources, motif adaptation practices, local skills, market opportunities, and stakeholder support were grouped into a "potential" category. Third, these two categories were systematically compared using a challenge-potential comparison matrix to identify intervention points where cultural potential can address sustainability challenges. Fourth, these intervention points were synthesized into revitalization strategies that include cultural documentation and mapping, motif transformation and design innovation, the development of creative products based on cultural heritage, community empowerment and artisan regeneration, as well as the strengthening of collaboration among stakeholders.

Data validity was ensured through methodological triangulation, source triangulation, member checking, and audit trails. Information obtained from interviews was compared with observational findings, visual documentation, and literature reviews to verify the consistency of the findings. Preliminary interpretations and thematic categorizations were also confirmed with several key informants through the member checking process. Additionally, the entire process of data collection, coding, category development, and interpretation was systematically documented to ensure transparency, traceability, and the replicability of the analytical procedures. The study adhered to the principles of social and cultural research ethics. All participants received an explanation of the research objectives, data collection procedures, and the intended use of research findings before providing informed consent. Participant identities were kept confidential through the use of codes or pseudonyms. All research activities were conducted with respect for local cultural norms, customary protocols, and the values prevailing in Kerinci society.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Cultural Values and Symbolic Meanings of Traditional Kerinci Carving Motifs

Traditional *Kerinci* carvings are a form of tangible cultural heritage that can still be found on *Rumah Larik*, *Bilik Padi*, and ancient mosque in Kerinci Regency and Sungai Penuh City [10], [11], [12]. In these three types of wooden structures, carvings are applied to various elements, such as pillars, walls, doors, windows, vents, *mihirabs*, pulpits, and vents. The presence of carvings on these traditional buildings demonstrates the connection between architectural function and cultural expression that has developed within Kerinci society. The architectural forms and application of carvings on the *Rumah Larik*, *Bilik Padi*, and ancient mosques can be seen in Fig. 1.



Fig. 1. Rumah Larik (left), Bilik Padi (center), and a ancient mosque (right)

The *Rumah Larik* (left) located in Dusun Baru, Sungai Penuh. The *Rumah Larik* is a stilt house arranged in a long row within a settlement. Carvings can be found on various parts of the building, such as the walls, doors, windows, *palasa* (balcony), *bendua* (floor joist), *alang* (rafter), and ceiling. Meanwhile, the *Bilik Padi* (center) is a rice storage hut located in Siulak. The *Bilik Padi* serves as a storage place for the harvest, specifically rice; carvings are placed on the exterior, particularly on the posts, walls, doors, and rafters. The Ancient Mosque (right) is a sacred mosque located in Lempur. The use of carvings is more prominent here compared to other buildings, both on interior and exterior elements, such as the *mihrab*, pulpit, pillars, vents, wall panels, ceilings, and moldings. Some mosque still retain traditional color schemes dominated by red, yellow, green, blue, white, and black colors that are characteristic of Kerinci decorative art. The observations reveal a predominance of stylized flora including stems, leaves, flowers, tendrils, and vines combined with geometric patterns. These forms are rendered through flowing curved lines with relatively shallow carving depths. This visual character creates a simple, natural, and unpretentious impression, while also distinguishing it from some carving traditions in the Indonesian archipelago that feature deeper reliefs and more complex compositions. The dominance of floral and geometric motifs is also linked to Islamic aesthetic influences, which tend to avoid figurative representation [14], [15]. Carvings do not merely pursue the beauty of form but also consider appropriateness, harmony, and spiritual value. This principle is crucial because traditional Kerinci art is not art free from norms but art that exists within the framework of customary traditions. Every form, surface, and decorative pattern relates to how the community understands the order of life. Traditional visual forms are not merely aesthetic objects; they embody culturally transmitted knowledge, values, and interpretive frameworks through which communities construct and reproduce their aesthetic understanding across generations. Such transmission occurs through sustained social practices, apprenticeship, and everyday cultural participation, enabling visual traditions to function as carriers of collective memory and cultural identity [16], [4].

Interviews with traditional leaders and cultural heirs reveal that carving motifs are not merely decorative elements, but are linked to various social and traditional values passed down through generations. A traditional leader in Pondok Tinggi explained, “These carvings are not just decorations. Each motif contains a traditional message that teaches how to live together, respect one another, and maintain a relationship with nature” (HA, 65 years old). A similar statement was made by a custodian of *Rumah Larik*, who noted that “previous generations generally understood the names and meanings of various carving motifs, although that knowledge is now beginning to fade” (HF, 58 years old). This statement aligns with the concept that cultural knowledge in traditional crafts constitutes tacit knowledge that is, knowledge passed down through practice, experience, and social interaction [17]. Such cultural transmission does not always occur through formal documentation but often persists through social learning processes that take place in everyday life [18]. Various motifs are associated with specific symbolic meanings in the traditions and customs of the Kerinci people. The *Keluk Paku* motif (fern curl), for example, is interpreted by traditional informants as a symbol of men’s responsibility in family and community life. Other motifs, such as *Lampit Mpat* (fourlayered weave), relate to togetherness, social bonds, and elements of traditional leadership, while *Lung Kangkung Patah Tumbuh Hilang Beganti* (broken water spinach shoots that grow, disappear, and are replaced) is associated with the concepts of resilience, regeneration, and the continuity of life. The *Matoahai* motif (sun) is associated with the source of life and hope, while *Bungea Kemboja* (frangipani flower) is linked to beauty and balance. Although most of these interpretations are passed down through oral tradition, the existence of these symbolic

meanings demonstrates the connection between visual forms and the value systems that have developed within society. In the study of cultural heritage, the relationship between traditional crafts and cultural identity is also frequently observed across various communities, where local visual forms serve as markers of collective identity and cultural memory [19].

The symbolic meaning of the motifs is also related to the context of the building where the carvings are applied. In the *Larik House*, carvings appear on elements related to family life and social relationships [10]. In the *Bilik Padi*, the application of carvings relates to agricultural activities, which are a central part of life for the Kerinci community [20]. Meanwhile, in ancient mosque, carvings are placed on nearly all elements as an expression of gratitude and respect, as well as to support the functions of the place of worship, such as the mihrab and the minbar, which hold central roles within the mosque's space [21]. This variation in placement demonstrates that the meaning of a motif is not solely tied to its visual form but also to the spatial context and social function of the space where the motif is used. This finding aligns with studies of vernacular architecture, which position a building's visual elements as part of the underlying social and cultural system [22], [18]. Studies on architectural symbolism also explain that visual elements in buildings often function as a medium for conveying values, identity, and cultural experiences. In addition to their connection to social and cultural values, *Kerinci* carving motifs are closely linked to the natural environment. Most motifs are derived from plant forms familiar to the local community in their daily lives. The use of flora as a source of visual inspiration reflects the Kerinci people's closeness to the environment, which is an integral part of their agrarian way of life. This finding aligns with various studies on cultural heritage and traditional ecological knowledge, which identify natural elements as the primary source of inspiration in the creation of cultural symbols and visual expressions [23], [24]. Based on these findings, traditional *Kerinci* carvings can be situated as part of a cultural system that embodies the local knowledge, social values, worldview, and historical experiences of the communities that practice them. The values inherent in the motifs are not only related to the visual identity of traditional buildings but also to the process of transmitting knowledge and collective memory within the community. From a cultural sustainability perspective, the sustainability of cultural heritage depends not only on the existence of physical artifacts but also on the sustainability of the accompanying knowledge, symbolic meanings, and social practices [17], [25]. Therefore, an understanding of the cultural values and symbolic meanings of motifs serves as a crucial foundation for examining the process of transforming traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs into various contemporary creative products, as discussed in the following section.

3.2. Transforming Traditional Kerinci Carving Motifs into Contemporary Creative Products

The cultural value and distinctive forms of traditional *Kerinci* carvings open up opportunities for their use beyond their architectural context. In studies on the revitalization of cultural heritage, traditions are not always preserved in a static form but can acquire new functions and spaces through processes of innovation and adaptation. Innovation is one way to ensure the sustainability of cultural heritage while expanding its social and economic benefits [26]. In line with this perspective, the incorporation of carving motifs into various contemporary creative products represents a form of cultural adaptation that bridges traditional heritage with the needs of today's society. Observations and interviews reveal that traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs, previously found on *Rumah Larik*, *Bilik Padi*, and ancient mosque, have gradually been applied to various non-architectural products, particularly batik, woodcraft, souvenirs, interior decorations, gifts, product packaging, and tourism promotional materials. This development has introduced new functions for the motifs. In this adaptation process, the motifs are not reproduced exactly as they were, but rather through adjustments to form, composition, and scale to suit the characteristics of the medium used. Integrating elements of cultural heritage into creative products requires a process of design reinterpretation to ensure that cultural identity is preserved while meeting the needs of both the product and its users [27]. In this way, traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs do not lose their cultural roots but gain new avenues to connect with contemporary society.

Some of the motifs that have been adapted for contemporary wood products and batik include *Lampit* (interlaced), *Bungea Kemboja* (frangipani flower), *Keluk Paku* (fern curl), *Lung*

Kangkung Patah Tumbuh Hilang Berganti (broken water spinach shoots that grow, disappear, and are replaced), and *Matoahai* (sun). In addition to carving motifs, various other cultural elements of Kerinci such as the *Incung* script, the form of the *Rumah Larik*, the *Bilik Padi*, and the silhouette of the Masjid Agung Pondok Tinggi are also utilized as sources of design inspiration. The use of these motifs is primarily found in batik patterns developed at several batik craft centers in Kerinci and Sungai Penuh City. A batik artisan explained: "Carving motifs are easier to introduce to the public when applied to batik because it is used daily. Additionally, these motifs serve as distinguishing features that set Kerinci batik apart from other regions." (A, 55 years old). This indicates that the application of motifs on everyday products contributes to the recognition of Kerinci's cultural visual identity among a broader public. Furthermore, innovations in traditional crafts can strengthen cultural identity if design development maintains its connection to the original cultural sources [19]. Examples of the adaptation of carving motifs and cultural heritage objects into contemporary products can be seen in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3 below.



Fig. 2. Adaptation of the *Lampit Dua* (double interwoven pattern) and *Bungea Kemboja* (frangipani flower) motifs on a *rebana* (frame drum) (left); adaptation of the *Keluk Paku* (fern curl) motif on a knife handle and sheath (center); and adaptation of the *Keluk Paku* (fern curl) and *Lampit Dua* (double interwoven pattern) motifs on a *tageak*, a traditional Kerinci drinking vessel (right).

Fig. 2 illustrates one example of the transformation of traditional Kerinci carving motifs into contemporary craft products at Indra Gunawan's craft workshop in Penawar, Kerinci. The *Lampit Dua* (double weave) and *Bungea Kemboja* (frangipani flower) motifs are applied to a tambourine (left) as decorative elements that reinforce local cultural identity. The *Keluk Paku* (fern curl) motif is applied to the handle and sheath of a knife (center) through a shaping process that follows the characteristics of the wood medium while preserving the visual features of the original motif. Meanwhile, on the *tageak* or traditional Kerinci drinking vessel (right), the *Keluk Paku* and *Lampit Dua* motifs are adapted as primary ornaments that blend seamlessly with the product's form. These various examples demonstrate that Kerinci carving motifs can be applied to a wide range of materials with varying degrees of adaptation without losing their primary visual characteristics. And Fig. 3 below.



Fig. 3. Adaptation of the *Lung Kangkung Patah Tumbuh Hilang Berganti* motif (broken water spinach shoots that grow, disappear, and are replaced) in batik design (left); adaptation of the *Incung* script and the architectural form of *Bilik Padi* in batik design (center); and adaptation of the *Incung* script and the architectural form of the Masjid Agung Pondok Tinggi in batik design (right).

Fig. 3 illustrates a form of media adaptation in which the transformation of traditional Kerinci carving motifs is not achieved through direct reproduction of the forms, but rather through a process of visual reinterpretation that adapts to the characteristics of the new medium. The *Lung Kangkung Patah Tumbuh Hilang Berganti* motif (broken water spinach shoots that grow, disappear, and are replaced) on a batik motif (left) created at the *Daun Sirih Awo batik* center in Rawang, Sungai Penuh. The *Incung* script and the *Bilik Padi* form in the batik motif (center) produced at the Puti Kincay batik center in Pondok Tinggi, Sungai Penuh. The

Incung script and the form of the Masjid Agung Pondok Tinggi in the batik motif (right) produced at the Incung Batik center in Sungai Penuh. In *batik*, the adaptation process is more complex because visual elements derived from carvings, *Incung* script, and traditional architecture are reworked into two dimensional compositions suitable for batik techniques. These forms are not transferred directly but undergo simplification, pattern repetition, and compositional adjustments. The development of creative products based on cultural heritage often involves the construction of narratives and visual reinterpretation so that new products retain a connection to the cultural sources that underpin them [28]. In the context of *Kerinci batik*, this process yields new visual variations that continue to reference local cultural elements.

Based on the research findings, the transformation of traditional Kerinci carving motifs occurs through three main forms of adaptation. First, visual adaptation, which involves simplifying the motifs' forms into patterns better suited for new media. Second, media adaptation, which involves applying the motifs to fabric, wood, souvenirs, interior decorations, product packaging, and promotional materials. Third, functional adaptation, which involves expanding the use of motifs from decorative elements in buildings to the visual identity of various creative products. These adaptation patterns position the integration of tradition and modernity as a key factor in the innovation of traditional crafts [19]. The transformation of motifs holds strategic value in strengthening the identity of local products. Informants from local government, business operators, and academia believe that creative products inspired by Kerinci carving motifs possess a strong point of differentiation because they convey a specific cultural narrative while reinforcing local identity. Amid the abundance of creative products that tend to be visually uniform, the presence of local motifs can provide character, depth of meaning, and emotional value for users. Creative products based on cultural heritage gain added value through cultural identity, design uniqueness, and product differentiation [29]. Products are not merely utilitarian objects but also serve as a medium to introduce Kerinci's cultural heritage to the broader public. In this context, carving motifs serve as a key source of visual inspiration that can support the development of products rooted in local culture.

Nevertheless, the process of transforming motifs still faces a number of obstacles. Research findings indicate that documentation of traditional motifs remains limited, meaning that not all motifs can be identified and utilized to their full potential. Much of the knowledge regarding the names, meanings, philosophies, and contexts of motif usage is still preserved in oral traditions and has not yet been systematically documented. In addition, some business owners acknowledge that design and product development capabilities still need to be strengthened so that the use of motifs does not stop at mere reproduction of visual forms. Another concern raised by informants relates to the use of motifs without an understanding of their cultural context, which has the potential to weaken the connection between new products and the cultural values that underpin them. Overall, the research findings show that the transformation of traditional Kerinci carving motifs has opened up new avenues for utilizing cultural heritage in various contemporary creative products. However, the sustainability of this process is not only related to the adaptation of visual forms but also to the documentation of cultural knowledge, the strengthening of the community's creative capacity, and institutional support. The sustainability of cultural heritage based innovation requires a connection between knowledge preservation, design development, and the strengthening of the creative ecosystem [26], [19], [30]. These findings indicate that the transformation of traditional carving motifs not only generates creative product innovations but also opens broader opportunities for the revitalization of the cultural ecosystem, encompassing institutional aspects, the regeneration of artisans, and multi stakeholder collaboration. Therefore, a revitalization strategy is needed that can integrate cultural preservation with product innovation and community empowerment in a sustainable manner.

3.3. Revitalizing the Heritage-Based Creative Ecosystem through the Transformation of Traditional Kerinci Carving Motifs

The transformation of traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs in this study serves not only as a process for creating creative products but also as an entry point for strengthening the broader ecosystem of cultural heritage revitalization. Based on the research findings, it is evident that

the main challenges facing traditional *Kerinci* carvings are not only related to the physical deterioration of the buildings where the carvings are located, but also the weakening transmission of cultural knowledge, the decline in the regeneration of artisans, the limited use of motifs in creative products, and the lack of optimal institutional support. These findings were consistently obtained from interviews with traditional leaders, heirs of the *Rumah Larik*, managers of ancient mosque, craftsmen, academics, and local government representatives. On the other hand, the study also found that traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs have great potential to be developed as a source of inspiration for creative products because they possess distinctive visual characteristics, embody local cultural identity, and remain recognizable to the community. Therefore, revitalization cannot be achieved through the physical conservation of buildings alone; rather, it must be directed toward reactivating the social, cultural, and economic functions of this cultural heritage. From the perspective of heritage revitalization and the heritage-based creative economy, cultural heritage is not merely an object of preservation but also a cultural resource utilized sustainably to support community development. Cultural heritage must be positioned as a source of creativity, innovation, and social value that is continuously reinterpreted to meet the needs of contemporary society [31]. Thus, the sustainability of cultural heritage is determined not only by the success of physical conservation but also by its ability to remain socially and economically relevant.

The first strategy is cultural documentation and mapping. Field observations have revealed that some *Rumah Larik*, *Bilik Padi*, and ancient mosque are in a state of physical disrepair, which could lead to the loss of their carved motifs and the cultural values they embody. Furthermore, most knowledge regarding motif names, symbolic meanings, production techniques, and contextual usage is still passed down orally. This situation makes documentation a fundamental step in revitalization efforts. Documentation encompasses not only the recording of the visual forms of motifs but also the documentation of symbolic meanings, history, social functions, production techniques, and the cultural narratives associated with each motif. This work can be carried out through field inventories, digital photography, mapping the locations of traditional buildings, audiovisual documentation, and the development of digital cultural archives accessible to the public, researchers, and younger generations. Thus, documentation serves as a mechanism for preserving cultural knowledge while also laying the foundation for the next phase of revitalization efforts. Digital documentation through cultural archives, digital repositories, and virtual heritage platforms is a vital tool for ensuring the sustainability of cultural knowledge, as it enables cultural information to be preserved, accessed, and studied by future generations [32]. The sustainability of cultural heritage requires a multidimensional strategy that encompasses documentation, education, innovation, community collaboration, and the use of digital technology [30]. In the context of traditional *Kerinci* woodcarving, the development of a digital database containing motifs, carving techniques, symbolic meanings, and the distribution locations of artifacts can serve as a strategic step to mitigate the risk of cultural knowledge loss while expanding public access to local cultural heritage.

The second strategy is the transformation of motifs through design adaptation. Research findings indicate that traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs possess the flexibility to be applied to various new media. However, this transformation is not achieved through direct reproduction of forms, but rather through a process of reinterpretation that adapts to the characteristics of the medium and the needs of contemporary design. Adaptation can be achieved through simplifying forms, repeating patterns, developing visual compositions, altering compositions, or combining them with other cultural elements such as the *Incung* script and traditional *Kerinci* architectural forms. In this process, the principle that must be maintained is the balance between innovation and cultural legibility. In this way, traditional motifs can be incorporated into various products without losing their connection to their original cultural heritage. Products based on cultural heritage possess stronger competitiveness because they contain cultural identity, historical narratives, and symbolic values that are not easily replicated by ordinary commercial products [28]. Furthermore, this approach aligns with the concept of creative heritage, which positions cultural heritage as a source of innovation through reinterpretation and contemporary creative practices without undermining the cultural values inherent in that heritage [33]. Transformation through design adaptation also plays a role in

maintaining the relevance of cultural heritage amidst social change and the development of the creative industries. Through this process of reinterpretation, traditional motifs find new expression across various media and products without losing their historical and cultural connection to their supporting communities.

The third strategy involves innovation and the development of creative products featuring traditional carving motifs. Based on interviews with batik artisans and woodcrafters, it was found that Kerinci carving motifs can be developed across various sectors of the creative economy, such as crafts, fashion, interior design, tourist souvenirs, product packaging, promotional materials, and regional visual identity. The development of culture-based creative products is essential for expanding the relevance of cultural heritage within the context of contemporary society. In this regard, the cultural value embedded in the motifs is not merely preserved as historical artifacts but is also reimagined in the form of products that serve an economic function. A creative economy approach rooted in cultural heritage views cultural resources as dynamic assets capable of generating innovation, entrepreneurship, and new economic opportunities for local communities [34]. Consequently, products that integrate local cultural identity possess stronger market differentiation because they offer symbolic experiences and a sense of authenticity that mass-produced goods lack [35]. This potential in Kerinci can be expanded through the development of tourist souvenirs, craft products, regional visual identities, and cultural tourism experiences based on the narrative of traditional carvings.

The fourth strategy involves community empowerment and the renewal of the artisan workforce. Research findings indicate that the number of traditional woodcarvers is dwindling, and the younger generation's interest in the profession is on the decline. Some informants noted that mastering carving skills requires a long learning process, while the economic opportunities available are not yet sufficiently appealing to the younger generation. Yet, traditional crafts play a vital role as a medium for transmitting cultural knowledge, as they embody values, skills, and systems of meaning passed down through daily social practices. Therefore, the community must be positioned as the primary agents of preservation and development, holding authority over the values, forms, and functions of cultural heritage. Revitalization must be accompanied by training programs, apprenticeships, cultural education, business mentoring, and capacity building for communities in the fields of design, production, and entrepreneurship. Traditional craft skills are largely tacit knowledge that can only be passed down through direct practice, intergenerational interaction, and experience-based learning [17]. Empowerment must also involve women's groups, which have long played a vital role in sustaining various craft traditions in Kerinci, such as bamboo weaving, pandan weaving, and traditional pottery. In this context, women's empowerment serves not only as a strategy for improving family economic well being but also as a means of transmitting cultural knowledge across generations. Furthermore, integrating traditional carving into formal and non formal education is a crucial long term strategy to address the crisis of artisan succession. This approach aligns with the concept of "creative inheritance" the process of revitalizing cultural heritage through creative learning relevant to the needs of the younger generation, ensuring that culture is not merely passively inherited but continuously reproduced and developed within a contemporary context.

The fifth strategy involves strengthening the collaborative ecosystem through a pentahelix approach that involves the government, academia, the business sector, communities, and the media. Research findings indicate that various efforts to preserve and develop traditional woodcarving remain fragmented and lack integration. The government plays a role in policy making, funding, and program facilitation. Academics contribute to research, documentation, and design innovation. Business actors are involved in production and marketing. Communities preserve cultural values and authenticity, while the media expands the promotion and visibility of Kerinci culture. This approach emphasizes the importance of participatory governance in cultural heritage management [36]. Additionally, ecosystem strengthening includes craft cooperatives, microfinance, training centers, digital platforms, cultural tourism villages, vernacular homestays, traditional cuisine, carving demonstrations, and craft exhibitions. The success of revitalization is measured not only by economic aspects but also by the strengthening of cultural identity, community participation, social cohesion, and community sustainability [37]. Therefore, multi-stakeholder collaboration is a critical prerequisite for building a

sustainable revitalization ecosystem. Based on these five components, the revitalization of traditional *Kerinci* woodcarving as a process that links the preservation of cultural heritage with innovation and the development of the creative economy, the following revitalization model has been formulated in Fig. 4.

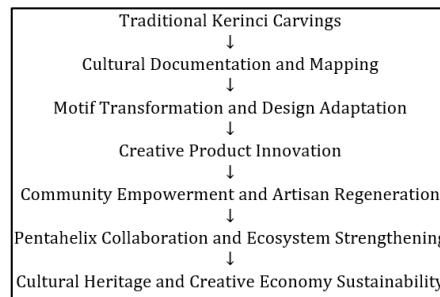


Fig. 4. Revitalization model of traditional *Kerinci* wood carving art

This model demonstrates that the sustainability of traditional *Kerinci* woodcarving depends not only on efforts to physically preserve the structures but also on the community's ability to understand, utilize, and revitalize the cultural values embedded within them. Cultural heritage serves as a source of creativity and innovation that continues to evolve [31]. Furthermore, cultural resources can become strategic assets in the development of community-based creative economies [34]. Thus, the revitalization of cultural heritage and the development of the creative economy are not two separate agendas but rather mutually supportive in achieving cultural sustainability, social resilience, and community well-being.

4. Conclusion

This study reveals that the transformation of traditional *Kerinci* carving motifs into creative products is not driven by design innovation, but rather by the breakdown of intergenerational knowledge transmission mechanisms. This situation has led to a fundamental shift from motifs as a system of cultural meaning to fragmented visual elements within the creative economy. The findings indicate that the primary changes do not occur in the visual form of the motifs, but rather in their epistemological status within the structure of local cultural knowledge. This study also found that the process of motif adaptation occurs in a non-standardized manner and depends on the individual initiative of artisans, resulting in a diversification of interpretations without a collective knowledge framework that binds cultural meaning. In this context, transformation does not automatically lead to cultural revitalization but rather accelerates the detachment of motifs from their original knowledge context. Furthermore, the research findings indicate that the sustainability of motif transformation is determined by the interconnectedness among cultural actors, local institutions, and the remnants of traditional knowledge that still persist. When this interconnectedness weakens, transformation tends to remain at the aesthetic level without expanding its cultural dimensions. Conceptually, this study confirms that motif transformation in the *Kerinci* context constitutes a form of cultural disembedding the detachment of cultural elements from their original knowledge systems prior to their integration into the creative economy. This finding offers a new perspective on cultural heritage revitalization, emphasizing that it cannot be reduced to mere product innovation but must instead be understood as a process of reconstructing the structures of cultural knowledge transmission that underpin the sustainability of meaning.

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