

# Industrial Design Innovation of Sarawak Contemporary Furniture Design

Muhammad Firdaus Abong Abdullah\*, Sharifah Emme Suzaimi Syed Mohd Zahari\*\*,  
Mastika Lamat\*\*\*

\**Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, amfirdaus@faca.unimas.my*

\*\* *Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, emme\_suzaimi@yahoo.com*

\*\*\* *Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, lmastika@faca.unimas.my*

**Abstract:** This paper is part of a fundamental research on indigenous Dayaks motif of Sarawak as part of innovative design element for a contemporary chair design. Reviews of existing study on relation between novel, augmented, and copied design is used as a basis for establishing a distinctive Sarawak essence in the Malaysian furniture industry through industrial design methodology. The research opportunities are focus on a number of significant disparities that have restricted the development of competitive furniture designs which include manufacturers' unfamiliarity with innovative design approach, lack of understanding on the importance of good design, uncertainty on user needs, and inappropriate use of critical design elements. This article provides an academic viewpoint on the importance of industrial design methodologies to the development of new innovation and performance of new furniture by outlining the appropriate industrial design services for each development stage. This viewpoint could be translated as a general guideline that can be referred and adapted by the furniture industries in order to produce innovative high quality furniture products that would enable them to compete in the local and international market.

**Keywords:** *Indigenous motif, Industrial design, Furniture design*

## 1. Introduction

The furniture industry is one of the most prosperous industries in Malaysia. In fact, Malaysia stands among the world's top ten wooden furniture producer with 2% share of the global furniture market or Ringgit Malaysia 4 billion of the total Malaysia export earnings from export of timber products in 2010 (1). The Malaysian Industrial Development Authority (MIDA) earlier in 2011 revealed that it has approved major furniture projects that created employment for about 5,000 people (2). Now, Malaysia is stepping further into being recognised as furniture design destination (3). The country has the potential to provide creative and innovative international high fashion furniture design based on local design elements. However, these elements have not being explored and exploited to create a truly Malaysian essence. Europe is famous for the "Italian style" luxury furniture and Indonesia is well-known for the exclusive teak furniture, which has proved to be highly in demand with the affluence users throughout the country. One distinct indigenous design element that could be applied to the furniture design in Malaysia is the indigenous Dayak's Motifs (Refer to Figure 1). These motifs are well recognised in Malaysia and could well be adopted as one of the prominent image of Malaysian furniture.