

Cultural Concept in Furniture Design: Perceptions, Issues and Challenges

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Abstract. Sarawak Borneo has been long known for diverse culture and multi-ethnics which reflected in its arts and crafts. Pua Kumbu and Orang Ulu motifs are among the famous visual art which can be seen on many products of textile, furniture and painting. The purpose of this paper is to identify the perception, issues and challenges of cultural concept embedded in furniture design from the perspective of manufacturers and designers. In-depth interview, survey and observation are the three qualitative research methods applied in this study during MIFF 2018 and MIFF 2019. Finding shows that each group: manufacturers and designers have their own views and strategies, looking at different aspects on how to interpret cultural element in their furniture design, deterred by their interests and global market needs.

Keywords: *cultural concept, indigenous elements, furniture design, marketing strategy, Sarawak Borneo, qualitative research*

1 Furniture Industry in Malaysia: An Overview

Malaysia is one of the world's furniture exporters and furniture industry has become an important country's economy. According to The National Export Council (NEC) in 2017, it is expected that by 2020, the industry will generate RM12 billion in revenue, with employment opportunities of around 240,000 and is set to continue contributing to the nation's exports earning.

The president of Malaysian Furniture Council (MFC), Chua Chun Chai stated that Malaysia's furniture exports are expected to grow by 8%, exceeding