

Conference Paper

The Power of Folktale: Tackling the Marketing Gap by Preserving the Authentic Rendeng Village Pottery Designs

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Abstract

Rendeng Village is a village located on the east of Java Island which famous for its pottery products. Its main products consist of tableware and piggy bank with various shapes and character. The piggy bank character produced by Rendeng Village is famous for its unique and authentic design which only produced from Rendeng Village. However, the selling demand and production for its established character beginning to decrease, which threatens its establishment as part of cultural products. This research aims to investigate folktale as a method to preserve a cultural fiction character by investigating the phenomena occurring in the establishment of Rendeng Village original character pottery products. The method used in this research is by analysing the cause of the decreasing demands of Rendeng Village original character pottery products, spatially, and non-spatially. Furthermore, this research explores the elements required in preserving established cultural products. The result of this study showed that there was not any historical trace/ story background, which supports the establishment of Rendeng Village original character pottery products. Therefore, it is believed that building a folktale could help the establishment of the original character and overcome the spatial limitation of pottery products marketing. The results of this research expect to be able to provide research results which complement the study around the preservations of cultural products.

Keywords: character, culture, folktale, pottery, and preservation

Introduction

Rendeng Village, produces various kinds of pottery products which some of it became part of their cultural products. Their livelihood of pottery production shapes the way people engage socially and performing all kinds of activity which eventually forms their cultural activity. These cultural developments also affect the way people shape their residential and their neighbourhood.

Rendeng village pottery products are revolving around diner ware and piggy banks, with piggy banks as one of their main products to produce. The piggy bank productions came in many forms. Currently, the highest selling products are the piggy banks shaped in various famous cartoon character and modern humanlike character (Figure 1). Some of these products are ordered massively as a wedding or some events souvenir. Many of the design are readily made but available for little customization to create a specific character on each of the event. However, Rendeng Village has been producing an authentic character for decades that sells throughout Java Island. These characters have becoming one of the cultural products which brands the pottery products of Rendeng Village. Unfortunately, the sales of the authentic pottery have decreasing quiet drastically over the past years, causing the craftsman in search

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of other high selling pottery products. Innovations with technological approach are essential in keeping excitement to the customers (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Nevertheless, it is essential to keep an original form intact in preserving cultural products. The situation brings a dilemma to the craftsman of Rendeng Village where they need to perform innovation in increasing the pottery product demand, while the lack of original pottery products production and demand endanger the preservation of the original product as part of a cultural product. This research aims to explore the elements required in preserving established cultural products, by investigating current inadequacy of Rendeng Village original pottery product marketing. Therefore, the result may be applied to enhance the preservation of Rendeng Village original pottery product.

Research Method

This study is conducted by observing the marketing environment of Rendeng village original piggy bank pottery design. The marketing environment criteria by Kotler and Armstrong is used to analyse the marketing condition. The analysis is conducted to overview the marketing sustainability of Rendeng village original piggy bank pottery design. The observation results then analysed to be used as the basis of cultural product development to preserve the pottery craft. In cases where the condition is unable to fulfil the ideal marketing environment, the demands in product selling may be affected. Therefore, this study also tries to evaluate and suggest a cultural development in preserving the cultural identity of the pottery craft which may also affected its market value. Furthermore, the dissemination impact of folktales through various studies are analysed, which result are used to provide suggestion of providing intangible cultural identity to the Rendeng village original piggy bank pottery design. The study suggested an embodied of intangible cultural identity to strengthen tangible aspect of Rendeng village original piggy bank pottery design, through a folktale.



Figure 1. Popular cartoon character pottery crafts (Source: Ariyasa documentation)

Result and Discussion

This study is located in Rendeng Village, Malo district which located on the north part of Bojonegoro Regency. This village 77,52 km² wide with a population of 1.101 people (BPS Bojonegoro, 2018). According to Oentoro, there are 87 small medium enterprise in Rendeng Village with the majority of the pottery crafter are elderly (2018). The tradition and culture of pottery crafting in Rendeng Village has begun since around 1800 and has supplied pottery craft to various places across Java Island (Oentoro, 2018). However, the current demand and the popularity of Rendeng Village pottery crafts is decreasing, affecting the income of the local craftsmen.

Some of the original design pottery crafts in Rendeng Village are piggy banks which are shaped in the form of tiger, chicken, and cow (Figure 2). The piggy bank pottery craft created in Rendeng Village is famous with a certain design character which implies the artistic sense of Rendeng Village craftsmen. However, the number of craftsmen who makes the authentic piggy bank pottery products are decreasing,

threatening the presence and the production of the piggy bank as part of the cultural product of Rendeng Village.

The tiger character from Rendeng Village pottery design craft has been chosen as the mascot of Bojonegoro city with the name of Gogor (Pembkab Bojonegoro, 2017). By using the authentic pottery design character from Rendeng Village, the local government had made an initial step in conserving the cultural products in Rendeng Village. Although, it was mentioned that the mascot has not been successfully acknowledged by the wider society to provide a conservation impact to the authentic design character of Rendeng Village pottery products (Radar Bojonegoro, 2018). Therefore, there need a further conservation act to preserve the authentic design of Rendeng Village pottery products, therefore it will last and acknowledged as part of the local cultural products for the future generation.

Observing the marketing and the selling environment of Rendeng Village pottery decreasing selling demand, there are several factors which affected the selling of the products. There are the Demographic environment, Economic environment, Natural environment, Technological environment, Political-legal environment, and Social cultural environment (Figure 3) (Kotler, 2003).



Figure 2. Rendeng village authentic piggy bank pottery products Source: Ariyasa documentation

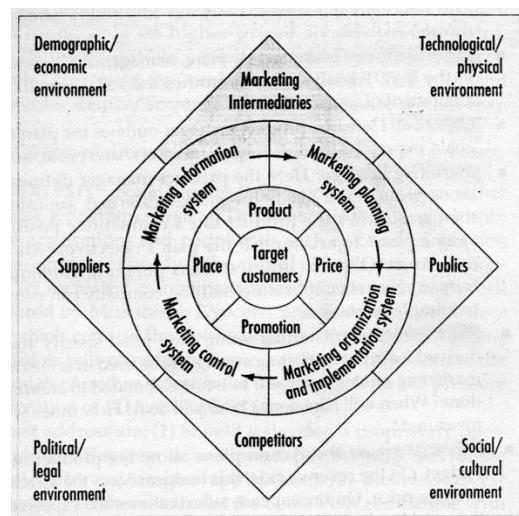


Figure 3. Factors influencing company marketing strategy Source: (Kotler, 2003a)

Demographic environment

There are several threats and advantages in the selling environment of Rendeng Village piggy bank pottery craft. Beginning with the advantages, the market source population covers an entire citizen of java island which may reach about 145.143.000 people (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2014). The population in java island has provided mass market and great selling opportunity and it has been the key point to the selling

of pottery craft of Rendeng Village. However, the age population segment mainly targeting children over the age of 5 to 15 years old, because the piggy bank aims the children who are still learning about saving and depositing money for their future, before they began to switch into the banks for more serious savings. The current condition is that the parents of these children are familiar with the products and begin to buy the piggy banks for their children, but this habit is beginning to disappear as more other piggy banks products came on the market as the contender for the Rendeng Village piggy bank pottery craft. The advantage of having Java Island population as the main market for the craft is also narrowing as the market of the piggy bank are mainly only reaching Javanese cultural society. Although the piggy banks are sold in many various city in Java Island, but the main distribution goes to the city of Surabaya, Solo, Semarang, and Jogjakarta which are dominated with the citizen with Javanese cultural society (Oentoro, 2018). Therefore, as the population of Java Island may be a huge advantage, but the age and cultural segment narrows down the marketing demographic environment potential.

Economic environment

The selling price of the Rendeng Village piggy bank pottery craft ranging from Rp. 10.000,00 to Rp. 75.000,00 depending on the type and the size of the products (Oentoro, 2018). The prices are considered to be cheap which indicates low to middle income market segment.

Natural environment

The pottery crafts in Rendeng Village are made from sediment soil gathered on the riverbanks of Bengawan Solo River. Every year on the rainy season, the water debit of the river is significantly increased to a point where it almost floods the entire Rendeng Village. However, the river also carries a soil sediment which then will pile up along the riverbanks. The craftsman then gathers the soil sediment to be used as the raw material for making the pottery craft. Furthermore, the production process cost very low energy leaving very few carbons foot print. The pottery was moulded manually and then dried under the direct sun. After the drying process, the pottery then burned using a rice harvest waste costing almost zero electricity or gas. Therefore, the whole crafting process of Rendeng village pottery are sustainable for the society as well as the energy waste.

Technological environment

There was not much apparent technological force around Rendeng Village. The pottery making processes are mostly done traditionally. The initial process is starting by gathering the soil which manually gathered directly from the riverbank. Some technological approach is applied in the moulding process, where some of the crafters are using a metal mould to shape their product. Although, many still prefer to shape their products manually using their own handicraft experience. The following process is the drying process where the pottery is being dried directly under the sun before undergoing the burning process (Figure 4). Nowadays the burning process are done using a pottery oven which is operated using electricity or gas. However, due to the cost of using oven, the crafter in Rendeng Village prefers to burn the pottery manually using leftover rice harvest waste (Figure 5). The colouring process are also done manually where the crafter is painting the products one by one, using only paint and brush.

Some of the decision of technological approach in making pottery products in Rendeng Village are affected mostly by the production cost which presumed to be higher compare to manual labour. Therefore, many pottery crafters in Rendeng village decided to produce their pottery product with manual process. The lack of technological approach in the production of pottery products in Rendeng Village is believed to be one of the factor which could obstruct the market and product expansion of the pottery

crafts (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). Some of the benefit of using technology such as time and labour efficiency were inapplicable to the production of Rendeng Village pottery products.



Figure 4. Sun drying process



Figure 5. Burning process

Political-legal environment

The pottery products of Rendeng Village only marketed locally around Java Island. Furthermore, the raw material of the pottery also gathered from the surrounding area of Rendeng Village. Therefore, the political-legal condition in Bojonegoro does not necessarily affected the production and marketing of Rendeng Village pottery products, especially since the production scale of Rendeng village original piggy bank pottery designs does not big enough to be affected by the political and legal environment of Bojonegoro.

Social cultural environment

Pottery is one of the cultural products of Rendeng village. The authenticity of the pottery pattern becoming the trademark of the Rendeng village product. Aside from the piggy bank pottery, some other pottery products of Rendeng Village are highly demanded due to the cultural ceremony that regularly carried out by the Javanese people. These cultural ceremonies support the sustainable product demand of Rendeng Village pottery products. Furthermore, owning a piggy bank coming from Rendeng Village becoming a culture on each family in teaching the younger generation saving money culture. Therefore, the demand of Rendeng Village pottery products is lasting from generation to generations.

However, currently there is a switch of demand due to the generation transition. The current generation does not recon the presence of Rendeng village pottery design. The popular cartoon character is more in demand compare to the original design. This is because the influence of electronic media is stronger and faster. Therefore, the cartoon characters are more acknowledgeable compare to the original design, which then threatens the original design preservation.

The market environment of Rendeng village pottery products are not necessarily beneficial for its marketing development especially for the authentic Rendeng village piggy bank pottery pattern. Although the demographic, economic, natural, and political environment are supporting the development of Rendeng village pottery products, the technological and social cultural environment do not support the marketing development. The generation shift holds the key problem to the degrading popularity of original Rendeng village pottery. Currently the millennial generation is the main market segment for the original Rendeng village piggy bank pottery. The millennial is the generation who have been tampered with the technological progression since the day that they were born (DeVaney, 2015). Therefore, many of their life influence are coming from the technology that are attached to them. For example, the fictional character that are accompanying the growth of a child are coming from cartoon character that are frequently appeared on the tv that they watch of from the phone from the social media that they look at. Meanwhile, before, fictional characters are coming from folk tales and local cultural stories that are passed down from generations to generations from their ancestors. Therefore, the tv cartoon character pottery products are currently more popular compare to the original design due to the lack of historical influence to the younger generation.

According to Bouchenaki (2003), a tangible cultural product requires an intangible manifestation for the product to be preserved and sustaine. After further analysis, it is found that the original Rendeng village piggy bank pottery products do not have any historical nor fictional story background. Compared to the popularity of the popular tv cartoon character, the original Rendeng village piggy bank pottery products lack an intangible factor which could relate and passed down to the younger society. Therefore, it is essential for the Rendeng village piggy bank pottery products to have an intangible manifestation in order for the product to sustain to younger generation.

According to several studies, the dissemination of folklore resulted in the preservation of cultural identity (Ballard, 2008; Evans, 2010; Tossa, 2012). In Bhutan, a research is conducted to see the impact of folklore to the social aspects in general. The result shows that the story gathered from folklore helps people to answers regarding their identity in a certain nationality or a part of a socio-cultural community (Evans, 2010). Tossa explained that the dissemination of folklore also helps to preserve the presence of local language dialect within the indigenous society (2012). The study which was done in Thailand once doubted by the local teachers that it will have implications to the indigenous child. However, after the folklore storytelling, the survey stated that most of the audience becoming prouder to their own local dialect. These studies indicated a significant impact in preserving cultural product and identity to a social community.

In preserving a cultural product, folklore possess an objection of cultural identity (Nations, Educational and Conference, 1989). Rendeng village piggy bank pottery craft possess cultural art aspects. However, the presence of it does not accompanied by any historical background nor folklore which may

strengthen its identity as a cultural entity. Ben-Amos stated that, a folklore may outlive the users and exist even until the culture itself disappears (1971). Therefore, in order to sustain its identity as a cultural product it needs to possess an intangible aspect or a folklore that can be passed down to younger generations.

In order to generate a folklore, the type of folklore needs to be determined first. There are three kinds of folklore that existed, it is either, “a body of knowledge, mode of thought, or a kind of art” (Ben-Amos, 1971). The body of knowledge and mode of thought folklore emphasize on the content or material of the folklore itself, while art folklore focuses on the media which transmit the story. Each possess different social context, such as communal possession (knowledge), collective representation (thought), and communal creation (art) (Ben-Amos, 1971). The social context that are expected from the folklore would also need to be determined so that there will be a synchronization between the tangible product with the intangible product.

The matter of generating folktale to the products of Rendeng village original piggy bank pottery designs is becoming urgent. The urgency lies to the implementation of cultural identity to the Rendeng village society, as well as the Rendeng village original piggy bank pottery designs. As cultural identity imbedded into the pottery products the surrounding society are expected to appreciate their local product better as the cultural identity becoming more apparent.

Conclusion

From the study, it can be concluded that the Rendeng village authentic piggy bank pottery products are currently endangered. Although the product itself is acknowledged as a cultural product of Rendeng village, it is failing to sustain its popularity among younger generations. The failing popularity is indicated through the decreasing demand of village authentic piggy bank pottery design, the increasing popularity and demand of TV character pottery product, and the decreasing number of pottery craftsmen in Rendeng village. According to the marketing environment analysis, the declining demand is due to the lack of technological innovations and the generation transition. Therefore, a conservation act is necessary in preserving the presence of Rendeng village authentic piggy bank pottery products and in increasing the pottery demand by rising its popularity. Further study suggested intangible cultural manifestation are essential in keeping tangible cultural product to be sustained throughout generations. Several studies revealed that the role of a popularization through folktale and storytelling successfully returning cultural values and favour to the societies perception.

Suggestion

This study suggested embedding folktales into the Rendeng village authentic piggy bank pottery products to provide cultural identity which will preserve the presence of the product through generations. With the presence of folktale as part of marketing media, the pottery product will begin to be acknowledged again among the younger generation and lifting its popularity to the wider community.

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