

The Innovation of “Minang Kayo” Leather Handicraft Products as an Icon of Padangpanjang City

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to identify and explore the product innovations of the Minang Kayo leather handicraft that have become an icon of Padangpanjang City. The Minang Kayo leather handicraft business is one of the leather craft businesses in Padangpanjang City. This business has become an icon of leather craftsmanship in the city and has contributed to the economy and tourism. Over time, this business has implemented various innovations in the products it creates. To address the issues in this research, a qualitative research method with an Innovation approach was used, employing data collection methods such as literature studies, observations, interviews, product documentation, and data analysis. Based on field findings, it can be concluded that the Minang Kayo leather handicrafts in Padangpanjang City have a diverse range of innovative leather products, including shoes, wallets, bags, hats, belts, jackets, and highly creative and innovative leather sandals.

KEYWORDS

Innovation, Leather Craft, Minang Kayo Padangpanjang

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INTRODUCTION

The creative economy is a form of value creation based on ideas, rooted in human creativity. In practice, the creative economy integrates knowledge, cultural heritage, and technological advancement as the primary foundations for the development of products and services (Septian & Leksono, 2020). One of the potential avenues for developing the creative economy in West Sumatra, particularly in the city of Padangpanjang, is the utilization of leather as a raw material for crafts, as demonstrated by the leather handicraft enterprise *Minang Kayo*. *Minang Kayo* represents a small-scale industry classified as a Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME), whose growth has been significantly driven by continuous product innovation over the past few years, particularly using leather as the main material.

Since ancient times, leather has been regarded as an essential natural material, comparable in importance to wood, stone, and natural fibers, all of which have contributed significantly to human quality of life. Animal leather is well known for its strength, durability, flexibility, and unique texture found in each piece. Technological advancements have further enriched the diversity of leather in terms of quality, function, and appearance, making it one of the best and most popular natural materials in the world (Nugraha, 2018). According to Eddy Purnomo, leather can be classified into

two categories that derived from large animals and that from smaller animals (Purnomo, 2001). The production of high-quality leather crafts requires the use of premium leather that is dry, free of holes, low in fat content, smooth, dense, strong, and easy to carve (Soedjono, 2008). Leather is the outermost layer of an animal's body that functions as a protective covering and a site for hair growth (Suardana, 2008). As noted by Ferawati in Mansyah et al., leather serves as the external framework of an animal's body where hair grows. Leather that has undergone the tanning process is referred to as tanned leather raw hide that has been processed using either natural or synthetic tanning agents. This process results in flexible, non rigid, and opaque leather, available in various types such as sole leather, textile leather, glove leather, and garment leather (Mansyah et al., 2023).

The *Minang Kayo* leather craft enterprise in Padangpanjang operates as a business group that frequently collaborates with artisans affiliated within the collective to enhance production capacity and efficiency. Such groups typically have better access to raw materials and market networks. This craft enterprise produces items made from high-quality leather, incorporating both traditional and modern artistic elements. The products include a wide range of leather goods such as bags, wallets, shoes, and various accessories.

Innovation within the enterprise spans product development, production processes, and marketing strategies. These innovations involve creative designs, new techniques, color variations, and novel functionalities, blending traditional and contemporary values into a cohesive aesthetic and functional form. These innovations serve not only as applied art in the form of wearable or utilitarian goods, but also function as cultural icons of Padangpanjang and distinctive representations of leather craftsmanship in West Sumatra. According to Ranelis and Washington, the distinctiveness of a product enables people to easily identify the place of origin where the craft was created (Ranelis & Washinton, 2015). Craftworks function not only as applied art products, but also as representations of cultural values, traditions, and the social identity of the communities in which they develop (Zam et al., 2022).

Innovation refers to an idea, object, or method that is novel and previously non-existent. The presence of such novelty is expected to generate interest and deliver tangible benefits to its users. Innovation involves the creation of entirely new tools, concepts, or ideas that have not yet materialized. This novelty is intended to offer something not only appealing but also functional. Individuals who consistently generate innovations are referred to as innovative persons, while those actively engaged in the innovation process are known as innovators (Batoebara, 2021).

Innovation can also be interpreted as something new or an improvement upon an existing idea or object. An innovator is someone who creates work with an innovative character or brings novelty to a product or idea (Mudra et al., 2020). At its core, innovation is rooted in the utilization of pre-existing elements, which are then modified and enhanced in value. Often, the process of innovation emerges from simple or overlooked aspects. Furthermore, innovation can also arise as a response to the needs, complaints, or aspirations of consumers, workers, and the broader social and environmental context (Aryono & Tresani, 2022).

Innovation is essentially an effort to implement creative ideas into tangible forms, particularly in product development. Creativity relates to the process of generating new ideas, while innovation transforms these ideas into practical and valuable applications (Wiyono et al., 2020). Ellitan and Anatan, as cited in Ajya and Purnama, define innovation as a creative process in producing new products, services, ideas, or processes. This includes innovations that are implemented within organizations as well as those developed externally. In other words, innovation can be understood as a transformation that occurs in tandem with organizational evolution (Ajy & Purnama, 2023).

The innovations carried out have contributed to improved product quality, which not only supports the preservation of cultural heritage but also enhances the competitiveness of the products at both national and international levels. This serves as an inspiration for other local crafts to continuously innovate and generate meaningful impact. This becomes a compelling reason to conduct a study on the *Minang Kayo* leather craft enterprise in Padangpanjang, specifically in terms of the product innovations it has implemented.

The main issue addressed in this research is the lack of documentation and analysis regarding the types of product innovation undertaken by *Minang Kayo*, and how such innovations have

positioned the enterprise as an icon of the city of Padangpanjang. Furthermore, it is essential to understand how these innovations contribute to reinforcing local identity, stimulating economic growth, and promoting the development of the creative tourism sector in Padangpanjang. Therefore, a research approach that provides a comprehensive and contextual depiction of innovation practices is needed.

This study aims to identify and explore various product innovations carried out by *Minang Kayo* leather craftsmen in Padangpanjang. It also seeks to map the types of innovations that have been developed, such as shoes, wallets, bags, hats, belts, and leather sandals that embody creative and innovative qualities. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for the development of innovation-based local crafts in other regions. This is what makes the *Minang Kayo* leather craft in Padangpanjang a compelling subject for research on product innovation.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach, deemed most appropriate for examining phenomena in the field of fine arts, particularly within the context of exploring aesthetic values and product innovation based on local culture. As explained by Soedarsono, the qualitative approach involves not only textual analysis but also contextual analysis that considers the social, cultural, and historical background of the subject being studied (Soedarsono, 2001). The theoretical foundation of this research is innovation theory, which is used to understand the dynamics of innovation carried out by *Minang Kayo* in developing leather crafts as an icon of Padangpanjang City.

Fundamentally, innovation is a continuation of invention, aimed at creating new value through the utilization of technology. The success of innovation is determined by the extent to which the innovative product or service is accepted by the market and provides tangible benefits to well-being. This requires a deep understanding of consumer needs and desires, as well as a creative attitude in designing new, more effective, and efficient solutions (Nasution & Kartajaya, 2018). Innovation is the process of creating and reapplying existing elements into new combinations. The novelty of innovation is contextualdependent on space and timemeaning that a product may be considered innovative in one region, but not necessarily in another, as perceptions of novelty are influenced by geographical and temporal conditions (Prabowo et al., 2022).

Data collection was conducted through several stages. The initial stage involved a literature review to gather conceptual and theoretical data from various sources related to innovation, leathercraft, and the creative economy. Data sources included books, journals, archival documents, photographic documentation, as well as visual and material artifacts related to *Minang Kayo* leather products. This literature review served as a conceptual foundation for understanding innovation practices in a local context.

Next, direct observation was carried out at the *Minang Kayo* production site to observe work processes, crafting techniques, materials used, and design elements applied. This observation aimed to identify innovative elements in the daily production practices. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with the business owner and craftsmen as key informants. These interviews explored motivations, strategies, and forms of innovation employed in responding to market challenges and the dynamics of the local creative industry.

As recommended by Moleong, the collected data were analyzed through several stages, starting with data reduction to filter relevant information, followed by grouping and categorizing based on innovation indicators such as product, process, marketing, and organizational innovation. The analysis process was conducted interpretively to uncover the meanings behind the creative and innovative actions of the craft practitioners. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, and the final results were interpreted theoretically to construct a substantive understanding of innovation practices in *Minang Kayo* leathercraft (Moleong, 2017).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The creative industry, in its development, has contributed positively to urban regeneration, economic development, and job creation in various regions. The growth of this sector is closely related to economic restructuring, which has shifted urban economicbases from manufacturing

sectors to knowledge and service based industries (Heryani et al., 2020). Craft art holds a strategic role in the development of the creative industry as it is rooted in local wisdom and forms part of the nation's cultural heritage. This form of art possesses great potential for continuous development and preservation, supported by the availability of human resources, surrounding cultural values, distinctive production techniques, a conducive environment, and a growing number of appreciators or consumers (Wicaksono, 2009). Nusantara crafts represent an artistic and cultural expression that reflects the richness and diversity of Indonesian society (Prihatin et al., 2024). Handicrafts are human creations that can be evaluated from various aspects, both aesthetic and functional (Manalu & Mesra, 2019).

The *Minang Kayo* leather handicraft enterprise in Padangpanjang exemplifies a form of creative industry that develops craft art based on leather materials through small-scale production. This enterprise remains active in producing leather goods in the city of Padangpanjang and has significant potential to contribute to the growth of the local economy. The business has undergone ongoing development through various forms of product innovation. These include the development of designs that blend traditional and modern elements, diversification of product types, and the use of more efficient production technologies.

The existence of *Minang Kayo* leather craft has given Padangpanjang a strong identity as a leather craft center in West Sumatra. According to Septian and Leksono, an icon encompasses all forms of symbols derived from images, ornaments, colors, and other graphic elements. Icons serve to convey iconic and symbolic meanings to an object or artifact, making them easier to recognize and identify by observers (Septian & Leksono, 2020).

Padangpanjang, as the leather industry hub in West Sumatra, is well known to the broader public and houses a Regional Technical Implementation Unit (UPTD) dedicated to leather tanning, located in Silaing Bawah. The location is strategic due to its proximity to the slaughterhouse (Dahlia & Sembiring, 2023). The UPTD for Leather Processing in Padangpanjang serves as a service unit focused on providing leather processing services (Farid et al., 2022).

According to Mrs. Priskurniawati, the innovations in *Minang Kayo*'s leather products include both applied and functional items such as bags, wallets, shoes, hats, sandals, belts, and other accessories made from leather (Priskurniawati, 2024). The products are made from high quality, eco friendly leather, utilizing sewing machines specialized for leather production. The growth of the leather products from *Minang Kayo* has progressed with the development of traditional-modern design modifications applied to various items such as bags, wallets, shoes, hats, belts, and accessories.

The presence of *Minang Kayo* leather craft contributes to economic and tourism development and has become an icon of Padangpanjang as a leather craft center in West Sumatra. According to Soetjipto, as cited in Hadiansyah and Fitrianto, small industries play a crucial role in Indonesia's economic development. Besides contributing to economic growth, small industries also absorb labor and reduce open unemployment. Crafts that fall into this category have proven resilient during past economic crises in Indonesia (Hadiansyah & Fitrianto, 2018).

Minang Kayo was established by a woman named Priskurniawati, a Javanese native from Malang, East Java, who migrated to Sumatra during her high school years. According to her, *Minang Kayo* was inspired by her admiration for Minangkabau culture. The name *Minang Kayo* reflects the richness of Minang traditions; "kayo" also means "older sibling" in Kerinci, a nod to her husband's origins from Sungai Penuh, Kerinci Regency (Husni & Azizah, 2021).

The business began in 2008 when she and her husband moved to Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, and opened a souvenir gallery selling leather-based items such as *capal datuak*, a traditional sandal worn by Minangkabau leaders. The positive market response led her to seriously develop the leather craft business. In 2014, she was invited to the *Senja Kenangan* event, during which the Padangpanjang City Government facilitated her participation by providing a gallery to display her work. There she met another leather craftsman, which led to collaboration and knowledge exchange that further developed the business (Husni & Azizah, 2021).

Initially, *Minang Kayo* produced leather goods such as *capal datuak*, sandals, hats, bags, wallets, and other items, made from cow, goat, sheep, and buffalo hides. The market reach expanded

to include international consumers in Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei. Today, *Minang Kayo* operates two main galleries: one located on the BukittinggiPadang highway near Lembah Anai Waterfall, and the other at its central workshop in Silaing Bawah. In addition to direct sales, *Minang Kayo* also actively markets its products online via social media and platforms like Shopee and Tokopedia (Husni & Azizah, 2021). The evolution of *tarompa datuak* shows that these items are no longer limited to traditional leaders but have transformed into distinctive souvenir items representing West Sumatra (Amrizal & Sumadi, 2018).

The enterprise employs both service and creative production workers. The number of creative workers is flexible and can be increased to meet spikes in demand. This adaptability ensures product quality and prompt delivery (Elfisha, 2024). Over time, *Minang Kayo* has developed its leather products with increasingly creative, varied, and innovative approaches across product, process, and marketing domains. According to Haryono and Marniyati in Pattipeilohy, product innovation includes new or modified products and new brands developed through research and development efforts (Pattipeilohy, 2018). *Minang Kayo* has achieved notable innovation by integrating traditional tanning techniques with modern design principles. Its products now prominently feature the *Minang Kayo* brand, enhancing consumer appeal and reinforcing a distinctive brand identity.

According to Nasution and Kartajaya, innovation can be realized in the form of products, processes, services, or organizations (Nasution & Kartajaya, 2018). Innovations cover product shape and function, design, technique, color, and raw materials. The use of higher-quality materials and the combination of traditional and modern aesthetics have enhanced the appeal of the products. These innovations include design diversification, improved packaging and branding strategies, and the use of efficient production technology to increase competitiveness and market appeal.

Service innovation is evident in the adaptive marketing strategies aligned with digital development. According to Priskurniawati, marketing efforts focus on strong brand identity, optimal social media usage (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp), and active participation in local and national craft exhibitions. Digital promotion emphasizes appealing visuals to build emotional connections with consumers. Marketing channels are divided approximately into 60% offline and 40% online, indicating that while digital marketing is essential, physical market presence remains a key strategy (Priskurniawati, 2024).

The innovations in *Minang Kayo*'s leather products include the development of modern designs, the use of more varied raw materials, and the application of more efficient production techniques. These innovations blend traditional craftsmanship with modern aesthetics, resulting in functional and iconic products of Padangpanjang. According to Priskurniawati, the functional products include bags, wallets, shoes, hats, sandals, belts, and other leather accessories (Priskurniawati, 2024).

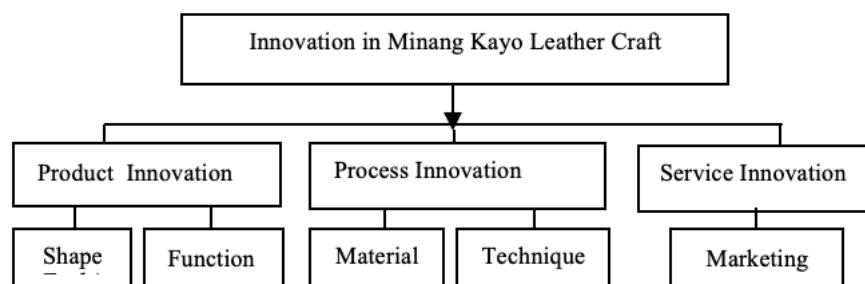


Figure 1. Diagram Innovation in Minang Kayo Leather Craft
(Source: Asmidar, 2024)

The innovations of Minang Kayo handicrafts are classified into three main domains: product innovation, process innovation, and service innovation. Product innovation involves the transformation of form and function, aiming to enhance aesthetics while adding practical value. Process innovation is realized through the combination of materials and techniques, including weaving and batik. Meanwhile, service innovation focuses on strengthening digital marketing

strategies, optimizing customer service, and implementing a consumer-needs-based approach to expand market access and sustainably increase competitiveness.



Figure 1. Datuak sandals, initial product
(Source: Priskurniawati, 2024)

Figure 1 The initial product of Minang Kayo leather craft is the Datuak sandal, featuring a traditional design characteristic of Minangkabau culture. This sandal is made from genuine leather with meticulous craftsmanship, combining functionality as everyday footwear and a strong symbol of cultural heritage. The Datuak sandal serves not only as a practical product but also as a cultural legacy reflecting the identity and values of the Minangkabau community.



Figure 2. Various sandal designs made from genuine leather by Minang Kayo leather crafts
(Source: Asmidar, 2024)

Figure 2 showcases various models of women's sandals made from genuine leather with open-toe designs. The styles range from flat sandals and wedges to strappy sandals with ergonomic soles that support user comfort. These products are primarily designed as stylish yet comfortable daily footwear, suitable for both casual and semi-formal activities. The use of natural tones such as cream, light brown, beige, off-white, and sea blue on the soles evokes a soft and feminine aesthetic. Several models are adorned with embossed floral accents and leather carvings, adding an ethnic and artistic touch that highlights the uniqueness of handcrafted designs.



Figure 3. Women's handbag made of genuine leather
(Source: Asmidar, 2024)

Figure 3 depicts a women's bag made of genuine leather with a classic semi-formal design. The shape is predominantly trapezoidal with a sturdy structure and a short handle suitable for hand carrying, complemented by a flap cover with a zipper for secure storage. Its primary function is as an elegant daily bag, appropriate for office use, formal events, as well as casual activities. The color palette includes navy blue, earthy brown, dark gray, and deep mocha, reflecting a neutral, professional, and versatile character. The design emphasizes a minimalist elegance and conveys a mature taste of the user.



Figure 4. Women's leather bags available in various color variation
(Source: Asmidar, 2024)

Figure 4 illustrates women's genuine leather bags available in various pastel and bright color options. The bags generally feature a boxy shape with a short flap, long shoulder straps, and some models have front zippers. Their primary function is as casual shoulder bags suitable for light daily activities such as commuting, attending college, or working. Colors like pastel pink, sky blue, lavender purple, mustard, olive green, and fuchsia reflect a feminine, energetic, and dynamic character. The design targets young adults to mature women who prefer a fashionable yet functional style. Functionally, these bags fall under the category of shoulder bags, ranging from small to medium size, designed to meet the needs of modern women in daily activities, semi-formal events, and as complementary accessories to contemporary ethnic fashion.



Figure 5. Women's leather bag combined with weaving technique
 (Source: Asmidar, 2024).

Figure 5 shows a women's leather bag combined with traditional weaving techniques. The bag has a predominantly small rectangular shape (shoulder bag) with a triangular flap closure and a long shoulder strap. Its function goes beyond just a container; it also serves as a fashion product that reinforces cultural identity. The flap is adorned with traditional Minangkabau weaving. The weaving features various colors such as navy blue, purple, and maroon, harmoniously paired with a leather base in nude, light gray, and milk brown tones. This combination conveys an ethnomodern impression and demonstrates the synergy between local culture and modern design. From an aesthetic perspective, this product represents a harmonious blend of modernity and local wisdom. The woven elements not only beautify the bag but also elevate cultural values that strengthen the Minangkabau ethnic identity. This bag is not only a functional item but also a medium of cultural expression, while expanding market opportunities for local craft products at both national and international levels.



Figure 6. Women's wallets made from genuine leather in various colors
 (Source: Asmidar, 2024)

Figure 6 depicts women's wallets made from genuine leather featuring a simple and versatile design. The wallets have a predominantly elongated rectangular shape with a zipper closure and a wrist strap, allowing them to be used as clutches as well. Their primary function is to securely and conveniently store money, cards, and small personal items, either carried alone or placed inside larger bags. The color variations are diverse, including navy blue, purple, turquoise, yellow, peach, light pink, and cream, reflecting adaptation to contemporary color trends. These colors not only provide style options for consumers but also enhance visual appeal and broaden the market segment, ranging from teenagers to adult women. The dominance of solid colors conveys a modern-minimalist elegant style. The wallets prioritize functionality and practicality wrapped in a simple yet visually attractive aesthetic.



Figure 7. Women's wallet made of genuine leather combined with traditional weaving technique
 (Source: Asmidar, 2024)

Figure 7 depicts a women's wallet made from genuine leather combined with traditional woven fabric. Its shape resembles a clutch or mini sling bag, featuring a flap or zipper closure on top and decorative textured accents. This wallet functions not only as a practical storage accessory but also as a fashion item that conveys local cultural values. The weaving pattern displayed on the front panel prominently features traditional Minangkabau motifs. The color combinations such as gold on a black base with toska green accents, cream with light brown, or ivory white paired with chestnut leather demonstrate a harmonious blend of traditional and modern elements. Visually and functionally, the wallet presents a modern ethnic aesthetic, making it not only a practical container but also a symbol of local cultural identity and pride.



Figure 8. Leather hat made from cowhide leather
(Source: Asmidar, 2024)

Figure 8 Leather hats The leather hats feature classic fedora and cowboy styles with wide brims and tall crowns that serve both to protect the head and to complement fashion styles. Made from genuine cowhide leather, these hats are strong, durable, and convey an elegant yet masculine impression. The colors include light brown, dark brown, black, and dark green, reflecting natural tones and masculinity. Some hats showcase embossed textures resembling reptile skin or woven patterns, along with leather strap accents, enhancing their aesthetic value while maintaining a natural and ethnic feel.



Figure 9. Shoes made from genuine leather
(Source: Asmidar, 2024)

Figure 9 displays a variety of men's and women's shoes made from genuine leather, consisting of two main types: formal oxford and derby boots for men, and slip-on and loafers for women. The shoe designs are ergonomically shaped to fit the wearer's feet, featuring soles that are flat or slightly heeled. Their functions range from formal occasions (such as work and official events) to casual daily use. The colors include deep black, dark brown, metallic gray, and mint green, demonstrating bold innovation in color while maintaining an elegant impression. The leather finishes vary from glossy to matte (doff), offering visual texture variety that enriches the product's overall appearance.

CONCLUSION

Minang Kayo leather crafts in Padangpanjang City have carried out product innovations that have shaped the identity of leather crafts as a city icon. The innovations undertaken by Minang Kayo are manifested in the form of product, process, and service innovations. Product innovations include shape and function, while process innovations involve materials and techniques. Service innovations encompass adaptive marketing strategies aligned with digital developments. Marketing efforts are focused on strengthening brand identity, optimizing the use of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, and actively participating in local and national craft exhibitions.

The role of the government in supporting the growth of Minang Kayo leather crafts cannot be overlooked. This support appears in various forms, ranging from providing technical and managerial training, facilitating access to business financing, to promoting products through official government events. These interventions have made significant contributions to accelerating the strengthening of craft business capacities and enhancing their presence in the national market. Therefore, if product innovation continues to be developed and marketing strategies are implemented consistently, Minang Kayo leather crafts have strong potential to become a flagship craft icon representing the creative image and culture of Padangpanjang City sustainably.

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