

# Definition and Importance of the Artist-Craftsperson in the Indonesian Craft Industry

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## Abstract

This study examined how craftsperson behave in their creative process journey to define relevant terms and describe the importance of artist-craftsperson in the craft industry. It adopted grounded theory to allow for empirical observations in the field and move interactively between data generation and data analysis as well as abstract themes emerging from data with the ultimate goal of organizing data through categories, typologies, or new theories. The subjects were 39 craftspersons of rattan furniture from the home industry cluster, who were selected for formal interviews, meeting the requirements of purposive sampling in qualitative research. The results showed that artist-craftspersons in craft industry mobility have an extremely limited definition; have broad insights into specialized knowledge and significant experience in seeking alternative materials and new techniques as well as closeness to nature; are innovative and novel in the self-expression inherent in their work; have excellent mastery of techniques and skills as well as natural abilities to be developed and preserved; consider pressure as a challenge to improvement; and view useful and beautiful work as a goal with the best quality and competitive prices even though the products can provide intrinsic stimulation. The importance of the artist-craftsperson for the furniture handicraft industry lies in developing quality craft, improving on contemporary craft designs, supporting the development of the handicraft industry, motivating young craftspersons, and preserving values and identity. This study also found that ordinary craftspersons are concurrently craftsperson-traders or artist-craftspersons who generally have workshops and art shops in their home environment. Ordinary craftspersons and artist-craftspersons have the same skills and potential but different mindsets. Ordinary craftspersons tend to fulfill market demand to meet the needs of life (basic income), causing them to lose creativity.

**Keywords:** furniture handicraft; craft industry, grounded theory, artist-craftsperson, ordinary-craftsperson; definition; Importance

## 1. Background

Handicrafts in Indonesia are included in micro, small, and medium enterprises in the field of crafts or arts that can survive and compete as the foundation of the national economy. This is because many craft industries in Indonesia grow and are rooted in the people's social and cultural conditions or based on their identity, characteristics, local genius, or local wisdom (Purnono et al., 2018). The Indonesian furniture handicraft industry has extensive historical roots in terms of production character and handwork, while machine tools support the production process (Irawati et al., 2013). According to Baharudin (2011), Indonesian traditional crafts have historically been divided into the realm of *kriya* (also written as *kria*) and crafts born from social stratification; *kriya* was born from the old tradition to refer to artworks produced by *abdi dalem kriya* (craftsperson). The term *kriya* is currently interpreted as a field of work (e.g., wood *kriya*, rattan *kriya*, ceramic

*kriya*, and others) that emerged from different motivations and at the same time has three different directions of interest, that is, preservation, economic, and commercial and personal expression, and the place to do this *kriya* activity is called a “*kriya* village” (Gustami, 1991).

In the handicraft industry, according to Triharini & Kagami (2014), there are three types of craftspersons in Indonesia: (1) The *artist-craftsperson*, who is found in all crafts-producing areas but limited to a few people. This craftsperson is engaged with and enjoys the whole process of craftmaking and is willing to spend the time to explore new ideas and techniques. They also receive orders from buyers in limited quantities because they tend to maintain a high quality of products. (2) The *craftsperson-trader*, who performs tasks similar to those of merchants/producers. They collect orders and distribute them to craftspeople in the area. *Craftsperson-traders* previously worked as *pure craftspersons* or *artist-craftspersons* unlike merchants/producers, who do not possess hand skills for producing crafts, and supervise the quality of crafts. Varying degrees of quality determine the payment for the *pure craftsperson's* work. And (3) the *pure craftsperson*, who does not consider any other aspect of making craft other than the demanded quantity.

Meanwhile, Ahmadi (2008) proposed the involvement of the *kriya* worker in the handicraft industry in six ways: (1) as a helper-craftsperson, whose work can be considered rough and does not require special skills and tends to help the more skilled; (2) as a *traditional craftsperson*, which refers to workers who diligently adhere to work patterns and traditional rules, work based on hereditary skills, perform design alone with slow development, and are less creative in designing new works; (3) as an *artist-craftsperson*, who creates designs and produces their own goods and always tries to keep their work new, with quite broad views of art and culture, and whose inventiveness is more free because they have no bonds with tradition, so their works are easily accepted by the public; (4) as a designer-*kriya* (craftsperson-designer), which includes planners, designers, and thinkers, yet the boundary between *artist-craftspersons* and designer-*kriya* is often unclear as one may be both, and for the most part, the designer-*kriya* comes from a higher education of fine arts, which is extremely small in number compared to *artist-craftspersons*, and craftsperson-designers prioritize their activities in big cities, while only a small part is in the countryside, which actually needs their expertise for the development of handicraft quality; (5) the entrepreneur-craft, who is skilled in managing the craft industry (based on capital, expertise in management and labor, and being observant in their marketing efforts), is not an expert in craftmaking design, but nevertheless can provide data input for *artist-craftspersons* and designers to create crafts that are suitable for the market; and (6) the trader-craft, who cannot afford it in terms of design and creating work, whose goods are mostly of low quality so that they can be sold cheaply, and who trade because they are compelled to provide for their own or their families' basic needs.

This section summarizes the existing categories of crafters into two: (1) *artist-craftspersons*, whose self-expression is inherent in their work on the condition that beauty is an intrinsic stimulus value, and its existence is extremely limited both in quantity and in the mobility of the craft industry, and (2) *ordinary craftspersons*, who are oriented toward mass production so that value rests on quantity and not beauty with rule-abiding work patterns and is generally easily found in craft industry centers.

Triharini and Kagami's study on *ordinary craftspersons* (represented by *craftsperson-traders* and *pure craftspersons*) implied that they once had skills equivalent to those of *artist-craftspersons*. As for Ahmadi's study, the term *trader-craft* was clearly found to have discrepancies in craft skills with *craftsperson-trader* in that *traditional craftspersons*, not trader-craft, are more suitable to represent *ordinary craftspersons*. The following sections place this research at the intersection of craftsperson research in the case of Trangsang Village, which focuses on two terms: *artist-craftsperson* and *ordinary craftsperson*.

This research position refers to Triharini & Kagami (2014) and Ahmadi (2008). Triharini and Kagami classified *craftsperson* into three (i.e., *artist-craftsperson*, *craftsperson-trader*, *pure craftsperson*), while Ahmadi identified six types of worker *kriya* involvement in crafts (i.e., helper-*craftsperson*, *traditional craftsperson*, *artist-craftsperson*, craftsperson-designer, entrepreneur-craft, trader-craft). Based on two theories, the researcher confirmed that these craftspersons are generally related to special skills in the craft, and these characteristics are present in the three types of craftspersons in Triharini and Kagami, while in Ahmadi, these characteristics are only present in the *traditional craftsperson* and the *artist-craftsperson*.

Table 1 shows the categories of craftspersons in terms of their character of handwork production.

Table 1. Categories of craftspersons in the context of Indonesia

Triharini & Kagami (2014)	Ahmadi (2008)	Researchers
1. <i>artist-craftsperson</i>	1. <i>helper-craftsperson</i>	1. <i>artist-craftsperson</i>
2. <i>craftsperson-trader</i>	2. <i>traditional craftsperson</i>	2. <i>ordinary craftsperson</i>
3. <i>pure craftsperson</i>	3. <i>artist-craftsperson</i>	
	4. <i>craftsperson-designer</i>	
	5. <i>entrepreneur-craft</i>	
	6. <i>trader-craft</i>	

In the present situation, the type of craftsperson is quite relevant if the researcher referred to Triharini & Kagami, but in the data coding conceptualization, the researcher based on the entrepreneur's own statement and their own observation of the type of craftsperson such that two types of craftspersons emerged: *artist-craftsperson* and *ordinary craftsperson*.

## 2. Objective

Considering the above background, the researcher asked the following question: What is the definition and importance of the *artist-craftsperson* in the furniture craft industry? The view of the term *artist-craftsperson*, Indonesian society continues to adhere to tradition, where they (*artist-craftspersons*) produce art items that usually serve their community for sacred ceremonies and other traditional activities; hence, the question and argument become endless.

This study examines the behavior exhibited by craftspersons in their creative process to define relevant terms and the importance of the *artist-craftsperson* in the craft industry. The novelty of this study is that it explains the definition and relevance of *artist-craftspersons* as opposed to *ordinary craftspersons* in the furniture craft industry in Trangsang Village.

## 3. Methodology and Participants

The researcher applied grounded theory (Eisenhardt, 1989) because it allows for an analysis of existing typologies and their limitations and recent developments in the field, close contact with empirical phenomena, and, most importantly, theoretical flexibility in terms of detecting new ideas useful for building new theories.

The general design of grounded theory involves understanding the literature on the phenomenon under investigation and relevant sensitivity concepts (Bowen, 2006), making empirical observations in the field, shifting interactively between data generation and data analysis, and abstracting themes that emerge from data with the ultimate goal of organizing information into categories, typologies, or new theories (Eisenhardt, 1989). Because crafter behavior must be observed in its natural setting, and because established theories have not thoroughly explained less rational forms of fashion, this study considered the case approach to grounded theory. Therefore, it relied on Eisenhardt's approach, which uses many cases as a way to observe the behavior of craftspersons and collect and record data that correspond to such behavior. This methodology is valuable in improving the field's understanding of many types of phenomena, such as how craftspersons identify and use valuable resources during their creation process and how the work of previous founders affects the business process of the craft industry.

Finally, the findings and recommendations of this study can help develop policy or knowledge and the provision of services and can reform thinking to initiate changes in substantive areas of inquiry.

This study focused on craftspersons of woven rattan, a type of furniture craft, as its research subject in its aim to define the craftsperson through a creative process. Craftspersons have different motivations and creativity that

distinguish them as entrepreneurs, makers, designers and even *artist-craftspersons*, and their attitudes and values will only be effective when they fit each craftsman's motivation and creativity (Zulaikha, 2014).

Specifically, this study focused on the case of Trangsang Village, which has been known as the "craft village" since the 1950s and even gained a designation from the Department of Industry and Trade of the Sukoharjo Regency as a Center for the furniture craft industry (Mursito, 2013). This is because, (1) since the 1990s, Trangsang Village has had a high density of craftsmen, with many home industries found in the central area of the industrial centers, and (2) this study focuses on village areas to examine the furniture craft industry from craftsmen in the home industry cluster.

#### 4. Field Research

##### 4.1. A Brief History of Trangsang Village as a Handicraft Village

In 2021, Gatak District was recorded as covering 1,937 hectares, or 3.96% of the area of the Sukoharjo Regency, and consisting of 14 villages: Sanggung, Kagokan, Blimbing, Krajan, Geneng, Jati, Trosemi, Luwang, Klaseman, Tempel, Sragen, Wironanggan, Trangsang, and Mayang, with Trangsang being the largest at 2.47 square kilometers.



Figure 1. Trangsang Village Area, Gatak District, Sukoharjo Regency  
(Source: BPS Kab. Sukoharjo, 2021)

Furthermore, Figure 2 below presents the Regional Spatial Plan showing Trangsang Village in detail.

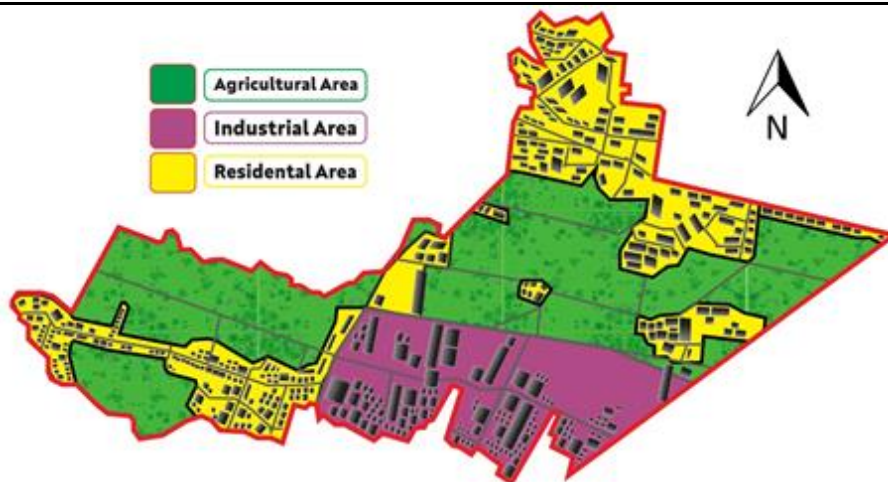


Figure 2. Details of the Regional Spatial Plan of Trangsang Village  
(Source: BPS Kab. Sukoharjo, 2020)

Almost half of the area of Trangsang Village is composed of rice fields, especially in the north, in addition to an industrial area in the south, with approximately 70% of the population working as farmers. Trangsang Village has transformed into a rattan furniture export town that is quite known in Indonesia and even internationally; 70% of its products are exported abroad, while the rest meet the needs of the local market.

The rattan furniture craft has existed since 1927 or 1928 according to some sources. Martosenotono, Wongsowijoyo, and Lurah Wongsolaksono, who were the main servants of the Surakarta Kasunan Palace, were interested in the flexibility of rattan and tried to make a crop hat and a long recliner from the combination of rattan and bamboo. After the death of Lurah Demang Wongsolaksono in 1949, Martosenotono and Wongsowijoyo continued to develop this rattan craft by transmitting their knowledge to their children and grandchildren as well as neighbors who were interested in rattan crafts (Sriyana, 2015).

Since the 1990s, the area has had a great density of craftsmen, with various types of emerging industries such as the cottage industry, large industries, and warehouses. Small or home industries are found in the central area of the industrial center and are thus easily accessible for visitors or tourists whereas many large industries or factories are located on the edge of the boundary of the industrial center. This is because factories require a large land area for production and packaging processes. Almost all residents of this industrial center have livelihoods as craftsmen. As mentioned by Triharini and Kagami (2014), the main livelihood of the village community is the production of handicrafts (at a household industrial scale).

The latest data reported that in addition to this village being known as a handicraft village, as stated in the Decree of the Regent of the Sukoharjo Level II Region Number 677/460/X/2016, it has also been named the Trangsang Rattan Tourism Village based on the realization of the uniqueness of a tourist village, local wisdom, and the creativity of local people. Other sources such as Suranta et al. (2019), Suryanto (2020), and Suparji (2020) mentioned that starting 2015, a new idea was born to establish an education-based tourism village, which is now a leading program with a positive effect on the economic conditions of the surrounding community and even outside it, such as Wonogiri and Klaten Regencies, which are affected in terms of employment.

#### 4.2. Data Sampling

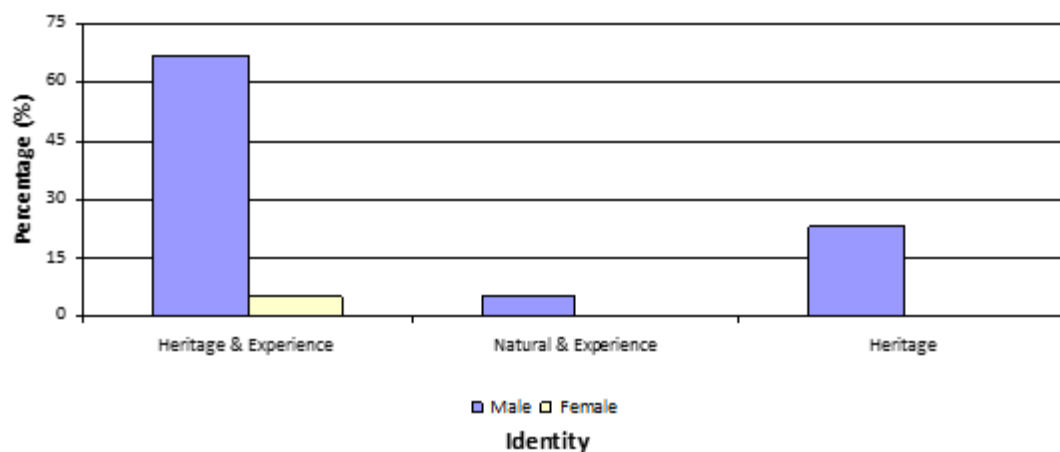
Trangsang Village, according to historical records, is the largest rattan handicraft center in Central Java Province, from which many rattan furniture cluster craftsmen emerged. Unfortunately, the meaning of the term *artist-craftsperson* is not yet known to the general public because it has widely circulated with the term *craftsperson*. This was a sound reason why this study chose craftsmen in Trangsang Village as relevant



subjects. As mentioned earlier, this study aims to define and demonstrate the importance of the *artist-craftsperson*. In this sense, we must reconsider their meaning and nature in the present context.

Trangsang Village is a furniture handicraft industry center in the western part of the Gatak District, Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java Province. Based on data obtained from the Trangsang Rattan Industry Cluster Workshop Forum (2015), the village has 180 home industries (furniture crafters). Following purposive sampling principles (Chen, 2006), this study interviewed 3 participants in the pilot study and 20 participants in the formal study. The idea behind data sampling in grounded theory is to select participants who will contribute best to understanding the research problem and question (Patton, 1990).

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the number of samples for grounded theory should be more than 12. This study recruited a total of 39 participants for formal interviews, which met the requirements of purposive sampling in qualitative research. In the formal interviews, the participants consisted of 2 women and 37 men between 30 and >50 years old. They came from various backgrounds of craft expertise/skills, including 28 from family inheritance and work experience, 2 under the category of natural/self-taught and work experience, and 9 from family heritage, which are similar to the statistics of the Trangsang Rattan Industry Cluster Crumb Forum (2015). Figure 3 shows the gender identity and distribution of the interviewees.



**Figure 3.** Analysis of respondent identities

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Semi-structured open interviews

This study collected and triangulated data through open interviews, field observations, and document analysis where available (Patton, 1990). The semi-structured open interviews were conducted with craftspersons and/or craft industry owners at the same time. Interview questions sought to obtain information that establishes the nature and history of the business as well as its performance.

This research focused on the type of cottage industry in the center of the rattan woven furniture handicraft industry in Trangsang Village, Central Java, Indonesia. The application of purposive sampling in grounded theory did not focus on crafters and their community activities but rather crafters in small, medium, and large industries. This basic theoretical analysis included interviews with 39 craftspersons renowned in the fields of the furniture craft industry.

The dataset presented in Table 2 includes 3 *artist-craftspersons* and 36 *ordinary craftspersons*. Craftspersons were selected through a theoretical sampling process (Corbin & Strauss, 2008), which is achieved by forming heterogeneous samples of *craftspersons* who have contributed the most to the development of the theory.

Data were collected from in-depth, semi-structured interviews and reflective notes from 39 craftspersons of the rattan woven furniture craft industry in Trangsang Village, Indonesia.

Table 2. Data Collection

<i>Craftsperson/business owner</i>	Type of <i>craftsperson</i>	Business age	Business background	Number of employees	Skills	Industrial market
Subagyo (1)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	28	Successor to the family business	13	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Rofi'I (2)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	22	Successor to the family business	25	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Sunyoto (3)	<i>craftsperson-trader (A)</i>	27	Personal business	15	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Marjono (4)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	32	Successor to the family business	5	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Harmanto (5)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	22	Successor to the family business	11	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Haryanto (6)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	22	Successor to the family business	12	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Gimin (7)	<i>artist-craftsperson (B)</i>	57	Successor to the family business	35	Self-taught & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Sardiman (8)	<i>artist-craftsperson (B)</i>	59	Successor to the family business	28	Self-taught & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Marno (9)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	27	Successor to the family business	9	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Sartono (10)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	24	Successor to the family business	7	Family inheritance	Regional & national [2]
Bambang (11)	<i>craftsperson-trader (A)</i>	22	Personal business	6	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Satino (12)	<i>craftsperson-trader (A)</i>	7	Personal business	7	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional [1]
Amin (13)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	30	Successor to the family business	12	Family inheritance	Regional & national [2]
Giyarti (14)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	33	Successor to the family business	15	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Joko (15)	<i>artist-craftsperson (B)</i>	33	Successor to the family business	13	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Santo (16)	<i>craftsperson-trader (A)</i>	5	Personal business	5	Family inheritance	Regional [1]

Craftsper son/busi ness owner	Type of craftsperson	Busine ss age	Business background	Numbe r of employ ees	Skills	Industrial market
Sutar (17)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	6	Personal business	6	Family inheritance	Regional & national [2]
Dahlan (18)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	32	Successor to the family business	8	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional & national [2]
Harjo (19)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	12	Successor to the family business	10	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional & national [2]
Trisnyan a (20)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	25	Successor to the family business	16	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Fotro (21)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	9	Personal business	5	Family inheritance	Regional [1]
Paham (22)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	31	Successor to the family business	21	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Suwarni (23)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	6	Personal business	5	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional [1]
Mulyono (24)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	30	Successor to the family business	10	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Sutito (25)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	5	Personal business	5	Family inheritance	Regional & national [2]
Hadi (26)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	19	Successor to the family business	7	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Jimy (27)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	7	Personal business	3	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional [1]
Suwardi (28)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	8	Personal business	17	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Parjiman (29)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	24	Successor to the family business	6	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional & national [2]
Ali (30)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	22	Successor to the family business	9	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional & national [2]
Agus (31)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	25	Personal business	6	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional & national [2]
Riyanto (32)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	12	Personal business	5	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional & national [2]
Supar (33)	<i>pure craftsperson (A)</i>	24	Successor to the family business	10	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Putra (34)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	23	Successor to the family business	8	Family inheritance	Regional & national [2]
Bintang (35)	<i>craftsperson- trader (A)</i>	24	Successor to the family business	7	Family inheritance	Regional & national [2]



Crafts person/business owner	Type of crafts person	Business age	Business background	Number of employees	Skills	Industrial market
Suwarno (36)	<i>crafts person-trader</i> (A)	23	Successor to the family business	5	Family inheritance	Regional & national [2]
Puji (37)	<i>pure crafts person</i> (A)	26	Successor to the family business	8	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Andi (38)	<i>crafts person-trader</i> (A)	30	Personal business	14	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]
Margo (39)	<i>pure crafts person</i> (A)	25	Successor to the family business	10	Family inheritance & work experience	Regional, national, international [3]

Interestingly, findings from Trangsang Village showed that almost all *pure crafts persons* (96%) were also crafts person-traders or *artist-crafts persons* who generally have workshops and art shops in their home environment, such as Mr. Sardiman (8)/type B (an *artist-crafts person* who is concurrently a crafts person-trader), Mr. Marno (9)/type A (a *pure crafts person* as well as a crafts person-trader), and Mr. Putra (34)/type A (a *crafts person-trader*).

Each type of crafts person in Trangsang Village reflected a unique behavior that they were willing and able to exhibit as crafts person-traders. Meanwhile, local buyers or visitors, especially those who know little about the uniqueness of the products made by the crafts person, preferred to buy as well as witness the handicraft-making process firsthand in the crafts person's private workshops. This situation causes all types of crafts persons in Trangsang Village to become crafts person-traders as well.

Crafts persons' family homes or private homes are designed with workshops right on the side to the back of the house, and the terrace, living room, and even the middle of the house are used as rooms or special places to display finished and semi-finished works as well as marketing stores. They are also open for anyone, be it the people they already know or visitors or guests, to see the real process and interact with them, and hosts are happy to teach anyone who wants to learn and feel the sensation of the process from handmade objects.

Another unique finding from Trangsang Village is that those who are actually *artist-crafts persons* create products that are not only made to order as they are generally *pure crafts persons* and *crafts person-traders*, but *artist-crafts persons* also make their own works or designs as a form of self-expression and self-satisfaction and then show them off in their own house, but when a visitor or guest wants to purchase the work, they willingly let them do so.

The subject entrepreneurs/crafts persons consistently followed patterns, adjusted themes, and reflected dominant categories that are now of concern to researchers. Qualitative analysis of business performance (e.g., sales) was based on the entrepreneurs' own statements and/or the researcher's observations of the type of crafts person (i.e., type A for *ordinary crafts persons* and type B for *artist-crafts persons*).

All types of crafts persons were highly responsive to their respective market shares as they continued to modify their business operations to better respond to certain changes. Business size in terms of number of employees was also an important factor in explaining business performance. This was logical given that company size is often used as a control variable when predicting business performance.

The crafts person category was associated with years of experience in the field of crafts ranging from the shortest, Mr. Santo, a *crafts person-trader*, at just five years (generally a private business), to the longest, Mr. Gimin, an *artist-crafts person* who has been in the field for 57 years (synonymous with hereditary business). The identity of the *artist-crafts person* lies in staying true to their vision whereas the identity of the *ordinary crafts person* lies in their loyalty to their trade.

## 5.2. Coding

Analysis began with open coding, which entailed examining and sorting text into categories. Key analysis of citations guided the development of new code labels, categories, subcategories, typologies, and theories. Open coding ended when the category was deemed sufficient, that is, when no new information could be added to the category. In this study, nine main categories emerged: existence, interaction between sources of knowledge, knowledge of and sensitivity to the matter, inventiveness, mastery skills, challenge/pressure, aesthetic value, utilitarian function, and quality. Open coding was followed by axial coding, which is the process of associating a category with its subcategories and testing their relation to data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The final step was selective coding, which is an integrative process of selecting core categories, systematically linking them to other categories, validating those relations by looking for confirmation and disconfirmation examples, and populating categories that require further refinement and development (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Alternatively, propositions or hypotheses can be determined to state the predicted relation. In this study, selective coding was performed using narrative descriptions of the nine previously identified elements through axial coding.

During the grounded theory process, analytical and self-reflective memos were generated in response to the open, axial, and selective coding processes. Analytical memos entail writing down questions, ideas, and speculations about emerging data and theories. Self-reflection memos are associated with writing personal reactions to narratives found in research data (e.g., documents, texts, other types of evidence). During the writing process, memos provide a solid basis for reporting and evaluating research and its implications (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The main objective of this study was to provide an original view of craftsperson behavior and its relation to the distinction between the terms *artist-craftsperson* and *ordinary craftsperson*. Through the procedures shown in Table 3, nine main categories were generated: (1) existence, (2) other main categories included in the interaction between knowledge sources, (3) knowledge of and sensitivity to the matter, (4) inventiveness, (5) mastery skill, (6) challenge/pressure, (7) aesthetic value, (8) utilitarian function, and (9) quality. Ultimately, the properties and characteristics of subcategories along the dimensional range were identified.

Besides interviews, field observations were recorded in logbooks during and after the interviews and field visits. These included impressions about the workplace, facilities, use of space, tools, processes, activities, outputs/products, and craftsperson's behavior. Each craftsperson/entrepreneur agreed to participate in this research.

Table 3. Selective coding based on grounded theory

Sorting data conceptualizations		Category	Subcategory		Typology	New theory
<i>ordinary craftsperson</i> (Code A)	<i>artist-craftsperson</i> (Code B)		<i>ordinary craftsperson</i> (Code A)	<i>artist-craftsperson</i> (Code B)		

Sorting data conceptualizations		Subcategory		Category	Typology	New theory
<i>ordinary craftsperson</i> (Code A)	<i>artist-craftsperson</i> (Code B)	<i>ordinary craftsperson</i> (Code A)	<i>artist-craftsperson</i> (Code B)			
“The <i>artist-craftsperson</i> in Trangsang Village can be counted on their fingers . . . maybe only 2–3 people, and I also previously worked in a workshop with Mr. Gimin ( <i>artist-craftsperson</i> ) for about 5 years . . . I felt that I was capable enough to make my own products, finally I decided to go out and open my own business . . . I personally take the path to produce products according to market demand only with a large number as a priority, because in addition to profit . . . The risk must also be considered”	“This is in my opinion, Mr. Sardiman is an <i>artist-craftsperson</i> . . . his whole life is dedicated to the craft seriously and totally, no doubt he (Mr. Sardiman) is very experienced . . . decades of his career as a <i>craftsperson</i> , and as far as I know only three people like that in Trangsang”	1. Existence	Many are found in the midst of crafter community activities (Triharini & Kagami, 2014; Zulaikha, 2014)	The number is extremely small; their existence is needed for the development of the quality of handicrafts (Ahmadi, 2008)	<i>Ordinary craftspersons</i> constitute the majority whereas <i>artist-craftspersons</i> constitute the minority	The existence of <i>artist-craftspersons</i> is extremely limited, especially in the mobility of the handicraft industry
“Right now I can only concentrate on completing the order, Mrs. Suwarni ( <i>craftsperson-trader</i> ) . . . I will also make the same craft if the product sells well.”	“I think by switching to a product that looks different . . . Such as new design, combination of woven techniques, can get more income . . . I am very happy to have a gallery full of works of expression, my own imagination, and it will be easier for me to sell my own works because I can tell stories and explain what they are”	2. Interactions between knowledge sources	Limited knowledge, only experience interacting with fellow craftsmen (Zulaikha, 2014)	Quite extensively, many are involved in tight circles (Ahmadi, 2008; Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	The experiences of <i>ordinary craftspersons</i> are limited to local interactions whereas those of <i>artist-craftspersons</i> are broader	<i>Artist-craftspersons</i> have greater insights with experience as a tutor
“Perfect rattan (such as texture, size, shape) gives a good work as well . . . in the process the process is easier”	“ <i>wong Jowo</i> , have a philosophy <i>nrimo</i> . . . which means acceptance . . . insist on maintaining harmony by minimizing personal conflicts, accepting a situation, and being grateful for what God has given, but accepting does not always mean that you should be happy with the situation . . . How to see his work such as materials, waste, skills, trying to explore new stamp alternatives, creative processes and	3. Knowledge of and sensitivity to the material	Do not know how to treat ingredients (Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	Understand extremely well the characteristics of specific materials and utilizing the best properties of materials (Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	<i>Ordinary craftspersons</i> view materials as objects, and <i>artist-craftspersons</i> have strong ties to materials	Special knowledge is gained through substantial experience that always seeks to explore new material alternatives, new techniques, and is extremely close to nature

Sorting data conceptualizations		Subcategory		Category	Typology	New theory
<i>ordinary craftsperson</i> (Code A)	<i>artist-craftsperson</i> (Code B)	<i>ordinary craftsperson</i> (Code A)	<i>artist-craftsperson</i> (Code B)			
	hopes in the form of peace, and blessings”					
“I would gladly make the same craft if the product sold well . . . The buyer still ordered the same design after more than one year.”	“Intuition, for every artist is important . . . Waiting for inspiration until execution is actually an intuition that is happy in nature . . . It means that so applying the technical to a work is trialing in material, then for the problem it is no longer what I do but how I want to do it.”	4. Inventiveness	Adhere to work patterns and traditional rules (Ahmadi, 2008)	Freer, not bound by tradition, emphasizing self-expression (Baharudin, 2011)	The system of work is bound by rules for <i>ordinary craftspersons</i> and free will for <i>artist-craftspersons</i>	Innovative and novelty with self-expression inherent in their work
“Parents used to teach this ability at home, starting with simple patterns for daily use diligently and adhering to predetermined patterns”	“The artist’s own body is a technical tool, practicing a lot to improve skills, efficiency, and maximum results . . . Being himself with such high innovation that others can’t imitate my work.”	5. Mastery skills	Working on the basis of hereditary skills, relying only on technical expertise by prioritizing repetition (Ahmadi, 2008; Diniafiat & Ambrose, 2021)	Learned naturally, the teacher is an environment of long experience, willing to preserve the craft (Triharini & Kagami, 2014; Shiner, 2012)	<i>Ordinary craftspersons</i> ’ technical prowess at repetition and <i>artist-craftspersons</i> ’ experience as a tutor	Mastering techniques and skills is excellent with abilities they learn naturally to develop and preserve
“I have, maybe five years ago . . . wanted to make the same product, and Mr. Joko (an <i>artist-craftsperson</i> ) taught him the technique . . . But once I discovered how hard it was, I stopped learning and went back to making ordinary crafts . . . And currently I manage the production system focusing more on traders than making crafts, because the risk is small”	“Consciously, when the world is globalized like the Internet, it has penetrated time and space, let alone there is a uniformity of systems, clearly structured . . . then I will speak in my local way . . . New engineering approach with multiple trials . . . can be more than five times . . . Keep exploring in product testing by discovering new processes so that they become basic and applied research . . . few craftsperson have good communication skills to express work, rich in the capacity of original ideas, brave with risks . . . Though this situation is a means of self-expression response that is rarely obtained by other	6. Challenge/pressure	It will be avoided because there is a risk of being disliked, often controlled by the market (Triharini & Kagami, 2014; Rees, 1997)	Tends to be led by himself, enjoys pressure as a challenge, dares to take risks (Rees, 1997; Zulaikha, 2014; Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	<i>Ordinary craftspersons</i> resist challenges whereas <i>artist-craftspersons</i> are motivated by challenges	Viewing pressure as a challenge to improve

Sorting data conceptualizations		Category	Subcategory		Typology	New theory
<i>ordinary craftsperson</i> (Code A)	<i>artist-craftsperson</i> (Code B)		<i>ordinary craftsperson</i> (Code A)	<i>artist-craftsperson</i> (Code B)		
	craftsperson, most of whom are not very proud of themselves . . . In addition, helplessness due to their limitations causes difficulties to control the situation”					
“I prefer the easy and fast way . . . It is important that crafts can be produced to order, completed faster than promised”	“For me . . . craft is more akin to art, aesthetic value as motivation, beautiful art must be able to communicate emotionally, its orientation is detached from the quantity that only sells well in the market”	7. Aesthetic value	The quantity aspect is a consideration to meet economic needs (Becker, 1978; Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	Beauty as a criterion of craft products, evaluating aesthetics on products, aesthetic value as motivation (Becker 1978; Zulaikha, 2014; Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	<i>Ordinary craftspersons</i> work without obsessive awareness of beauty and <i>artist-craftspersons</i> reconcile beauty as value	The goal is only to create useful and beautiful works
“Products are made cheaply . . . which puts quantity at the top priority in the design process”	“In usefulness . . . Form and aesthetics are factors supporting functionality, not the main goal . . . In addition, it must be able to show the strength of the product, provide intrinsic stimuli or psychological needs such as pride, satisfaction”	8. Utilitarian functions	Utilitarian functions are not carefully considered, crafts as side jobs, crafts are made in large quantities with low production costs (Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	Crafts should serve a practical utilitarian function, products are more strongly influenced by hedonic value (Stoddard et al., 2012; Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	<i>Ordinary craftspersons</i> are oriented toward mass production and <i>artist-craftspersons</i> carefully consider function, value, benefit	The product is able to provide intrinsic stimulation
“The good and bad quality is based on the price . . . This quality is also an effect of the fierce competition”	“Making quality products is a strong principle and my main goal . . . I believe there is still a chance to survive in the midst of competition with other industrial products”	9. Quality	The results of rough weave/weaving, used once, the price is extremely low (Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	Useful, good quality, can be used for a long time is the main purpose of work, aesthetically appreciated (Triharini & Kagami, 2014)	<i>Ordinary craftspersons</i> produce disposable products and <i>artist-craftspersons</i> make good-quality products	Best quality as well as competitive price

## 6. Discussion

The procedure in Table 3 produced nine main categories, shown in Figure 4. Existence is the core category (1), and other major categories include interactions between knowledge sources (2), knowledge of and sensitivity to the material (3), inventiveness (4), mastery skills (5), challenge/pressure (6), aesthetic value (7), utilitarian functions (8), and quality (9).





Figure 4. Structure of the 9 core categories and 18 keywords

### 6.1. Existence is a core category

The characteristics of the category of existence were supported by two subcategories: “easy to find” and “very limited.”

Interestingly, the existence of the *artist-craftsperson* in the midst of the mobility of furniture craft industry centers is inconsequential compared with that of the *ordinary craftsperson*. As shown in the interview with Mr. Fotro, an *ordinary craftsperson*, “The *artist-craftsperson* in Trangsang Village can be counted on their fingers . . . maybe only 2–3 people, and I also previously worked in a workshop with Mr. Gimim (*artist-craftsperson*) for about 5 years . . . I felt that I was capable enough to make my own products, finally I decided to go out and open my own business . . . I personally take the path to produce products according to market demand only with a large number as a priority, because in addition to profit . . . The risk must also be considered.” As observed in the interview with Mr. Dahlan, an *ordinary craftsperson*, “This is in my opinion, Mr. Sardiman is an *artist-craftsperson* . . . his whole life is dedicated to the craft seriously and totally, no doubt he (Mr. Sardiman) is very experienced . . . decades of his career as a craftsperson, and as far as I know only three people like that in Trangsang.”

This study illustrated that *ordinary craftspersons* used to have the same skills as *artist-craftspersons*, but in the next journey, *ordinary craftspersons* positioned themselves as producers who create and also collect from other craftspersons to meet market demands, and this model was more commonly observed in the handicraft industry center (Trangsang Village). Meanwhile, the *artist-craftsperson* focuses more on their vision, so their existence is less.

### 6.2. Interactions between knowledge sources

The categorical characteristics of interactions between knowledge sources were supported by two subcategories: limited experience and rich experience.

Experience is processed through various forms of interaction, such as the common phenomenon involving artisans in the countryside, that is, knowledge gained by interacting with fellow craftspersons about efforts and design strategies or technology. In the manufacturing stage, craftspersons intermingle in learning and production activities through material experiences, work tools unique to each material, and new techniques in creating the best craft. Mr. Amin, an *ordinary craftsperson*, said, “Right now I can only concentrate on completing the order, Mrs. Suwarni . . . I will also make the same craft if the product sells well.” However, Mr. Joko, an *artist-craftsperson*, was not too interested in making the same type of product: “I think by switching to a product that

looks different . . . Such as new design, combination of woven techniques, can get more income . . . I am very happy to have a gallery full of works of expression, my own imagination, and it will be easier for me to sell my own works because I can tell stories and explain what they are.”

This study illustrates that the interaction between the *artist-craftsperson* and the source of knowledge has a broader insight and a strong personal identity with experience as a tutor whereas the *ordinary craftsperson*, in their interaction with knowledge sources, is limited to the scope between related professions or business communities.

### 6.3. Knowledge of and sensitivity to the material

The characteristics of the category of knowledge of and sensitivity to matter/materials are supported by two subcategories: general material knowledge, and knowledge and closeness to nature.

Crafts are born where raw materials are needed, and the production of crafts depends on good materials. As shown in the interview with Mr. Agus, an *ordinary craftsperson*, “Rattan, for craftsperson like me, this is considered a staple . . . The difficulty of working with materials such as rattan began to be scarce, not good, expensive.” Likewise, Mr. Hadi, an *ordinary craftsperson*, said, “Perfect rattan (such as texture, size, shape) gives a good work as well . . . in the process the process is easier.” However, for Mr. Gimin, an *artist-craftsperson*, special knowledge is gained through a series of close interactive experiences with natural materials: “*wong Jowo*, have a philosophy *nrimo* . . . which means acceptance . . . insist on maintaining harmony by minimizing personal conflicts, accepting a situation and being grateful for what God has given, but accepting does not always mean that you should be happy with the situation . . . How to see his work such as: materials, waste, skills, trying to explore new stamp alternatives, creative processes and hopes in the form of peace, and blessings.”

This study clarifies that every craftsperson must possess knowledge of and closeness to nature, ensure that the materials provided by nature are always the best, and realize that the beauty aspect of the craft lies in the aesthetics of the materials, and an idea may arise after one’s use of inspiring materials. The good and bad of the work are based on how perfect the technique is and how to use materials well and wisely; this is clearly learned with special knowledge obtained from the experience of interacting with matter, and nature is more than enough to give its best, which is only understood by a few.

### 6.4. Inventiveness

The characteristics of inventiveness are supported by two subcategories: traditional work patterns and creating one’s own designs and products.

Crafts rely not only on perseverance and hand skills but also the existence of creative inventiveness so that the product has a certain value and meaning as a sign. As observed in the interview with Mr. Sardiman, an *artist-craftsperson*, “Intuition, for every artist is important . . . Waiting for inspiration until execution is actually an intuition that is happy in nature . . . It means that so applying the technical to a work is trialing in material, then for the problem it is no longer what I do but how I want to do it.”

Inventiveness applies to Mr. Harmanto, an *ordinary craftsperson*, who said, “I would gladly make the same craft if the product sold well . . . The buyer still ordered the same design after more than one year.”

This study shows that inventiveness in changing the mindset of *ordinary craftspersons* is more difficult because they are accustomed to being bound by patterns, traditions, and the instinct to finally succeed. In the context of *artist-craftspersons*, they were not only successful in altering their technique for working on traditional patterns but also acquired a sense of balance so that the results exceeded their expectations and were generally easily accepted by society.

### 6.5. Mastery skills

Characteristics of mastery skills were supported by two subcategories: source of expertise and background ability.

Skills include the craftsman's ability to create craft objects using certain tools with certain techniques. In the case of Indonesia, craft skills have the same background, which is hereditary. As shown in the interview with Mr. Andi, an *ordinary craftsman*, "Parents used to teach this ability at home, starting with simple patterns for daily use diligently and adhering to predetermined patterns." There is a difference in the concept of mastering skills according to Mr. Gimin, an *artist-craftsman*, who stated, "The artist's own body is a technical tool, practicing a lot to improve skills, efficiency, and maximum results . . . Being himself with such high innovation that others can't imitate my work."

This study demonstrates that mastery skills originate from inheritance and that sometimes, abilities are systematically never taught. For *artist-craftsmen*, this skill is learned naturally to be developed and preserved.

#### 6.6. Challenge/pressure

The characteristics of challenge/pressure are supported by two subcategories: "considered" and "pressure is challenge."

Problems can be approached as challenges that require technical refinement, which expands the knowledge base. As shown in the interview with Mr. Gimin, an *artist-craftsman*, "Consciously, when the world is globalized like the Internet, it has penetrated time and space, let alone there is a uniformity of systems, clearly structured . . . then I will speak in my local way . . . New engineering approach with multiple trials . . . can be more than five times . . . Keep exploring in product testing by discovering new processes so that they become basic and applied research . . . few craftsman have good communication skills to express work, rich in the capacity of original ideas, brave with risks . . . Through this situation is a means of self-expression response that is rarely obtained by other craftsman, most of whom are not very proud of themselves . . . In addition, helplessness due to their limitations causes difficulties to control the situation."

Mr. Putra, an *ordinary craftsman*, said, "I have, maybe five years ago . . . wanted to make the same product, and Mr. Joko, an *artist-craftsman*, taught him the technique . . . But once I discovered how hard it was, I stopped learning and went back to making ordinary crafts . . . And currently I manage the production system focusing more on traders than making crafts, because the risk is small."

This study shows that *artist-craftsmen* enjoy working under pressure as a challenge, taking risks with the goal of improving. However, unlike *ordinary craftsmen*, who cannot stand pressure, *artist-craftsmen* consider and even avoid risks.

#### 6.7. Aesthetic value

The characteristics of aesthetic value are supported by two subcategories: values based on quantity and values based on beauty.

The value of beauty is what the *artist-craftsman* used as a source of decision-making at every stage in the process of creation. As shown in the interview with Mr. Gimin, an *artist-craftsman*, "For me . . . craft is more akin to art, aesthetic value as motivation, beautiful art must be able to communicate emotionally, its orientation is detached from the quantity that only sells well in the market." Things are different for Mr. Bintang, an *ordinary craftsman*, who stated, "I prefer the easy and fast way . . . It is important that crafts can be produced to order, completed faster than promised."

This study reveals that crafts detached from aesthetic value, as well as mass production, in which prices are cheap, are typical. The lack of attention to aesthetic value makes the craft lose its prestige and specialty.

#### 6.8. Utilitarian functions

The categorical characteristics of utilitarian functions are supported by two subcategories: objective characteristics of products, and utilitarian and hedonic.

Beautiful craft objects must serve a utilitarian function as stated by Mr. Joko, an *artist-craftsman*: "In usefulness . . . Form and aesthetics are factors supporting functionality, not the main goal . . . In addition, it must

be able to show the strength of the product, provide intrinsic stimuli or psychological needs such as pride, satisfaction.” Meanwhile, according to Mrs. Giyarti, an *ordinary craftsperson*, “Products are made cheaply . . . which puts quantity at the top priority in the design process.”

The study shows that craftwork should serve a utilitarian function for the user and be beautiful at the same time. *Ordinary craftspersons* as well as *artist-craftspersons* are always motivated to achieve this goal as they work, considering various aspects in the production process.

### 6.9. Quality

The characteristics of quality are supported by two subcategories: “disposable” and “used for a long time.”

Improving the quality of handicrafts and the market’s acceptance of them is sometimes inconsistent with efforts to support the preservation of crafts as cultural resources. Mr. Sunyoto, an *ordinary craftsperson*, said, “The good and bad quality is based on the price . . . This quality is also an effect of the fierce competition.” However, Mr. Gimin, an *artist-craftsperson*, stated that “making quality products is a strong principle and my main goal . . . I believe there is still a chance to survive in the midst of competition with other industrial products.”

This study demonstrates that quality production will be maintained because people respect high-quality handicrafts through their experience of using crafts.

### 6.10. The importance of the artist-craftsperson in the furniture craft industry in Indonesia

Despite these differences, *ordinary craftspersons* and *artist-craftspersons* can demonstrate their importance to the furniture craft industry in Indonesia. Before discussing this further, this study will highlight the general urgency surrounding the handicraft industry itself, whose aim is to strengthen the status of the craft industry without neglecting its characteristics as an important aspect of cultural and economic life in the countryside. Kerr (1991) and Rogerson (2000) suggested that the craft industry is a highly meaningful source of income for rural communities and encourages employment, which can be part time or full time.

Girón et al. (2007) reported that the craft industry depends not on natural resources but on the intellectual capacity of human resources to develop innovative products or markets. This indicates an opportunity for the industry to grow as a source of income in the future. Zulaikha (2014) explained that in the case of the rural handicraft industry, many craftspersons pursue innovation with the assumption that they are experts in their fields. According to Rachmad and Syurya (2022), handicraft industry products are not mass-produced; rather, production volume is highly dependent on craftspersons’ expertise.

Furthermore, according to Triharini and Kagami (2014), the emergence of *artist-craftspersons* led to a common type of craftsperson, and both aim to achieve certain design goals. Craft development was greatly influenced by social and economic conditions. Recently, *artist-craftspersons* have begun engaging in contemporary crafts to enhance traditional craft designs.

## 7. Conclusions

Based on a grounded theory approach, this research has provided new insights into the behavior of *ordinary craftspersons* and *artist-craftspersons*. Nine categories were revealed: existence, interaction between knowledge sources, knowledge of and sensitivity to the material, inventiveness, mastery skills, challenge/pressure, aesthetic value, utilitarian functions, and quality, with existence as a core category.

### 7.1. Definition

Following the above discussion, this study concludes that the *artist-craftsperson* has an extremely limited definition in craft industry mobility, has broad insights with specialized knowledge and significant experience that always seeks to explore alternative materials and new techniques and is intimate with nature, is innovative and novel in terms of the self-expression inherent in their work, demonstrates excellent mastery of techniques and skills to develop and preserve the abilities they learned naturally, considers pressure as a challenge to improve, focuses on useful and beautiful work as a goal in that the products they make can provide intrinsic stimulation, the best quality, and competitive prices.

Craftsperson-traders previously worked as *artist-craftspersons* and therefore possess the skills to produce crafts, but they also collect orders, supervise the quality of crafts, and distribute them. Different quality levels determine how craftspersons are paid for their work.

## 7.2. Importance

The *artist-craftsperson* is relevant to the Indonesian furniture handicraft industry in that they are needed for the development of quality craft, the improvement of more contemporary craft designs, the advancement of the handicraft industry, motivation for young craftspersons, and the preservation of values and identity.

The *artist-craftsperson* is closely linked to creativity in that their work possesses beauty, quality, and innovation and can be accepted by the community. A new attitude, perspective, and concept is essential for the potential, process, and creative product of the *artist-craftsperson*. Meanwhile, the *ordinary craftsperson* tends to fulfill market demands to meet their basic needs (basic income), causing them to lose creativity. Both have the same skills and potential but generally adhere to different mindsets.

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