

**UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**MOTIF AND PATTERN DESIGN IN *MENGKUANG*  
AND *PANDAN* PLAITING FROM PENINSULAR  
MALAYSIA**

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## ABSTRACT

Plaiting is one of the crafts that have been passed down from generation to generation in Malay culture and this art brings has brought awareness to anyone for the aesthetic value that possesses. This craft started since the age of Neolithic but it keeps on evolving through time due to the increasing demands and the element of creativity that the individuals who had produced it. However, despite of the fact that the demand for the plaiting crafts is high, it does not mean that we do not need to preserve this valuable treasure from vanishing through the rapid flow of modernization. Continuous effort must be carried out in order to ensure that the youths of today are still able to appreciate the fineness of this art that is originated from their ancestors which money cannot value. The effort put by the precious generations has brought our nation to the eyes of the world which we are known for this art by the world community. This art is also a form of identity to our nation which is very unique and authentic. The skill of plaiting is passed down or taught informally in order to prevent it from being extinct by time. In order to obtain accurate information, the researcher has carried out interview sessions with some of the people that are involved with the plaiting skill directly and indirectly at the Kuala Lumpur Craft Centre and other branches in Terengganu, Kedah and Melaka. The interview sessions for the respective states are vital for the research in an attempt to identify the types of motifs and patterns that have been chosen for the plaiting of *mengkuang* and *pandan* that can be found in these three states. This research would lead to discovering new method of plaiting or developed into contemporary design for *mengkuang* and *pandan* products for commercialization.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

The art of plaiting is one of the traditional Malay Handicraft which is operated by most women and single mother. In the past, plaiting was used as household items for daily use and as their past time activity. According to A. Samad (1986), the Malay in the past was known to perform activities related to entrepreneurship in the production of commercial craft. That means it is not only carried out for daily use and leisure only, but it is one of the activities undertaken by commercial enterprise until now. The history of plaiting is also believed to have been started during the Neolithic age in parallel with the development of art pottery that was popular during that time.

The purpose of plaiting is to produce a mat product by applying cross media production. Plaiting process is one activity which is time consuming and some plaiting is complicated to prepare. The process also requires determination and patience, which is highly necessary in the production of a type of plaiting. Without persistence, perseverance plaiting activity cannot be done because it depends on each medium used in the process and surrounding area. Plaiting activities also require high expertise because the workers need to have convergence and accuracy in the production of any equipment or products based on the type of plaiting to be produced. Any plaiting designed with unique and creative will help society maintain the original Malay culture.

According to Siti Zainon (1986), plaiting is also available in many areas and districts in Malaysia that are still performing plaiting activities using different materials. Besides Terengganu, *pandan* plaiting is still available in the east coast states such as Kelantan and Pahang because some of these *pandan* still available in many coastal areas. In contrast, the states Perlis, Kedah, Perak and Melaka are producing *mengkuang* or screwpine plaiting.

Motif is the result of duplication small images that are arranged in well-ordered on a structural basic. These recurrent of images or motif will lead to the production of a pattern. These motifs can be seen in various works that adorn the handmade of the design surface to create an interesting pattern such as craft plaiting,