



Vernacular Typography Design of Bamboo *Keben* Craft as an Opportunity of Creating Digital Typeface

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Abstract

Keben for the Balinese is a medium that functions to package ceremonial facilities made of bamboo. Craftsmen in Kayubihi village, Bangli sub-district produce *kebens* with various designs of vernacular typography motifs that have the opportunity to be developed in the form of digital typefaces. This study aims to: (1) analyze the vernacular typographic design of the *keben* motif and its opportunities in the creation of digital typefaces; (2) analyze the meaning of *keben* in Kayubihi village in a socio-cultural context. Qualitative methods are used in this study. Typographic design principles consisting of legibility, readability, visibility, and clarity are used to analyze the vernacular typography of the *keben* motifs, while Saussure's semiotic approach is used to give meaning to the *keben* of Kayubihi village from the spirit and the concept behind it. Data collection strategies were carried out by observation and interviews, online and offline. Meanwhile, data analysis was carried out by interpreting, namely interpreting in-depth the collected data according to the research objectives. The results show that the vernacular typography of the *keben* motifs was arranged alphabetically to form words as a symbol of identity. Geometric motifs inspired by the environment around the craftsmen can be classified into five groups: the sun, flowers, traditional fabrics, objects, and cultural symbols of Balinese Hinduism. These motifs can be developed into digital typefaces. *Keben* in Kayubihi village spiritually means creativity, preservation of culture and identity. This creativity can be used as a source of inspiration in designing typefaces that offer novelty. The vernacular typography design with the *keben* motif is indigenous creativity, representing the identity of the local Balinese culture.

Keywords: *Keben*, Vernacular Typography, Digital Typeface, Indigenous Creativity

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INTRODUCTION

The woven bamboo craft of Kayubihi village is passed down from previous ancestors to the next generation in the family and community environment. This shows the process of cultural enculturation and

continues to this day (Sugiarto et al., 2017). Kayubihi Village developed various *Keben* ranging from shapes, colors, and motifs by exploring the traditions of Balinese local cultural wisdom as capital for craftsmen in their work (Mudra et al., 2020).

The most in-demand innovation in

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the market today is *keben* with a letter motif design known as vernacular typography. The vernacular typography design of *keben* is a product of visual communication design in the form of various forms and written designs, adorning the surface of *keben* by the craftsmen of the Kayubihi village becoming part of the daily life of the community. A vernacular typography design with a *keben* motif adorns the surface of the *keben*, made manually from bamboo using traditional woven techniques. The term “vernacular” comes from the word “vernaculus” with the root word “verna” meaning slave children born around the master’s house. Then it is interpreted as a local language, native accent, and dialect in everyday life, different from the formal language studied in academics (CONCEPT magazine edition of February, 2011). The vernacular typography design with the *keben* motif is a creation of new letters sourced from the environment around the community. It makes an impression of tradition, familiar, distinctive, and unique by highlighting local cultural identity (Akbar & Raden, 2016).

In typography, the placement of letter motifs as part of the *keben* is not limited to only letter elements, but the arrangement of letters in a layout. Based on this, the arrangement of letters in the *keben* is referred to as vernacular typography, not vernacular letters because it involves aspects of the layout of the letters on certain surfaces and areas (Carella et al., 2017).

Letters as one of the elements of Visual Communication Design have an important role to support the success of delivering messages to the target audience. According to Haswanto in Lukman (2015), typography can create an atmosphere in a Visual Communication Design work, reflected through the characteristics of the letters used. The selection of the right letter characteristics in a design work can support success in delivering the message. The visual form of letters should be able to send messages and meaning and more importantly should be able to visualize the level of sound, feeling, hierarchy, impor-

tance, information, and clarity (Haswanto, 2009). Success in delivering messages is also influenced by optical factors in the form of legibility related to the ease of recognizing and distinguishing each letter/character. Readability relates to the level of being easy to read a text (Rustan, 2011:22).

The tradition of weaving bamboo carried out by the Kayubihi village community can be categorized as an intangible cultural heritage included in the category of traditional crafts which play an important role as a medium of defense of existing cultural diversity (Idris et al., 2016). Previous studies related to woven bamboo crafts have been carried out in the scope and field of science.

A study by Mudra (2020) does not specifically discuss the *keben* made from bamboo with the weaving technique. Another study by Swaratama (2020) states that Dayak tattoo motifs and techniques as a cultural tradition of the Dayak tribe contain a value and uniqueness as a typeface. Using an iconographic approach, it produces a formulation in the design of typefaces based on the Iban Dayak motif.

The findings of Swaratama’s (2020) research, in the form of a typeface, can be used as a reference in this study, with the object of research being a vernacular typography design with a *keben*. The inspiration for the design of a new typeface can be obtained from various sources, for example, the decoration of the temple. Nugroho’s (2019) research has the same goal as a form of preserving local cultural heritage in the form of the typeface. Meanwhile, the research was conducted to explore the vernacular typography design of the *keben* motif with the weaving technique as a source of inspiration to strengthen the initial stages of creating digital typefaces.

Another relevant result of Putri’s (2014) research states that woven bamboo crafts in the Kejapa Bamboo Handicrafts Tigawasa Village, Buleleng Regency, produce various forms of products with varied motifs. The product forms consist of tissue boxes, bags, wallets, jewelry boxes, ring boxes, pencil cases, and photo frames,

while the resulting motifs include the motifs of *saudbah*, *tapuk manggis*, *nagasari*, *patra*, *pis bolong*, and *wajik*. This research is a reference that in other areas in Bali there are bamboo craft centers that develop various types of products with different characteristics.

Research by Haswanto (2009) reveals that in designing letters, a designer can create various types of letters containing different meanings and impressions embodied in one letter family package. Based on this, the *keben* opportunity to be designed into a new typeface in a letter family package that can give a certain meaning and impression.

The novelty of this study shows that the vernacular typographic design of the *keben* as a traditional cultural product can be preserved across generations in the current modern era adaptively, so that tradition can still exist in technological advances without reducing the value of local wisdom contained in it. This further emphasizes that modernization does not crush tradition, but that tradition has the opportunity to be developed in modern ways through digital technology. Through this research, it is hoped that it can contribute ideas to the treasures of Visual Communication Design, especially typography. This research can be used as references that specifically discuss the vernacular typographic design of the *keben* motif and the meaning of *keben* as a cultural product. *Keбен* with a vernacular typographic motif design full of local Balinese cultural wisdom values that are not found in other areas.

Keбен motifs developed by the Kayubihi village craftsmen are local indigenous creativity (Raharja, 2017:69), which have the opportunity to be developed digitally so that they can be preserved and documented. However, there has been no in-depth research on this subject. This research is important to do as an effort to introduce one of the local cultural wisdom of the Balinese people originating from the *keбен* produced by the craftsmen of Kayubihi village. This research specifically aims to analyze: (1) the vernacular typog-

raphy design of the *keбен* using the bamboo weaving technique in Kayubihi village that has the opportunity to be developed and adapted with digital techniques in the creation of typefaces; and (2) the meaning of the *keбен* of Kayubihi Bangli in the socio-cultural context.

METHOD

This research was conducted in Kayubihi Village, Bangli Sub-district because it is the largest center for *keбен* craftsmen in Bali. Qualitative methods are used with the support of data collection strategies such as observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Primary data sources are informants who are involved in the *keбен* craft of Kayubihi village. While the secondary data sources are photographs, pictures, and related documents.

The source of the data was determined by using a purposive sampling technique, which was initiated by determining the key informants first. Through key informants, several informants were obtained who were able to provide data following the research objectives. The object of research in the form of *keбен* is determined based on certain criteria, namely woven bamboo *keбен* with vernacular typographic design motifs, forming a word that is found on the surface of the *keбен* as a decoration. To obtain adequate data, researchers also conducted searches through online media to the seller accounts of *keбен* on Instagram social media.

Data were analyzed descriptively qualitatively, using a typographic design approach consisting of legibility, readability, and visibility related to the ease of reading letters and text at a certain distance. Clarity is related to the quality of letters and text in its function as a means of delivering messages so that they can be clearly understood (Akbar & Raden, 2016). Exploring the meaning of *keбен* by the craftsmen of Kayubihi village uses the semiotic approach of Ferdinand de Saussure, describing the relationship of the sign system consisting of signified + signifier and sign

in the socio-cultural context of Bali.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Vernacular Typography Design of *Keбен* Motifs of Kayubihi Village

Vernacular typography design of *keбен* motifs by craftsmen of Kayubihi village Bangli sub-district can form letters of the alphabet from A-Z and numbers categorized as Latin letters. Through the strand weaving technique with repeated sloping lines, up and down, high and low, providing a static and dynamic rhythm, resulting in geometric motifs arranged to adorn the entire surface, *keбен* can have an opportunity to be developed as digital typefaces (Rahayuningsih, Paresti, 2018:6). In the modern era, Latin letters have become the most effective written communication medium. Latin letters can be categorized as a type of phonetic script in the form of a phoneme symbol (ab-c-d-e) (Nugroho, 2019).

Keбен for the Balinese people is a product of cultural arts that has an essential function and role in religious and socio-cultural life as a reflection of the culture of the community (Sabana, 2007). Therefore, the creativity in the design of *keбен* found in the village of Kayubihi Bangli (2021) has developed following the needs of the community in carrying out religious rituals and following fashion trends in Bali with designs or models still with traditional patterns (Arinasa&Peneng, 2013;108).

The presence of various *keбен* depicting the characteristics of the Kayubihi village identity aims to explain the characteristics of local culture that have the opportunity to be developed in the form of typefaces by adopting vernacular typographic designs with *keбен* motifs (Rahayuningsih & Paresti, 2018:3). The vernacular typography design of the *keбен* motifs by the craftsmen of Kayubihi village develops sustainably following the development of the creativity of the craftsmen and through stages of deep reflection, produces various forms of natural motif design patterns. Based on the results of creativity

and shape, it is possible to classify the *keбен* motifs of the Kayubihi village into five groups consisting of sun, flowers, traditional fabrics, objects, and cultural symbols of Balinese Hinduism as presented in Table 1. The shape of the vernacular typographic pattern is designed by changing the shape (distortion), modifying the style, and rearranging it (repetition) so that various vernacular typographic designs adorn the surface of the *keбен* (Saragi, 2018).

Vernacular typography design with *Keбен* motifs in Kayubihi village as it characterizes the creativity of ideas and cultural values embodied in various designs made by the craftsmen of Kayubihi village as a reflection of the value of local cultural wisdom of the Balinese people who are known to have an artistic spirit. This is in line with Covarrubias's view which states that Balinese people deserve to be called artists (Mudra et al., 2020). *Keбен* craftsmen in Kayubihi village are artists who are formed from the social environment of the surrounding community in joint activities so that a collective identity emerges (Carella et al., 2017).

Vernacular typography designs with *keбен* motifs in Kayubihi village were spread verbally from one crafter group to another following the request from the customer. Customers of *keбен* who come usually bring samples of pictures they get from the internet. These craftsmen are creative by looking at the trends being updated from social media through smartphones. This process takes place repeatedly so that various vernacular typographic design innovations with *keбен* motifs are created, and the shape and color of *keбен* are always novel (Me Juna 65 years old in interview, December 2021). This process is interpreted as a transfer of skills between craftsmen and others as a pattern of inheritance of the art of woven bamboo crafts from the Kayubihi village community (Sugiarto et al., 2017).

The naming of the vernacular typography design with the *keбен* motif came from the environment around the Kayubihi village craftsmen which was then mutu-

ally agreed upon to make it easier for the crafter group to make orders. Customers who come if they want *keben* with a motif according to their taste, simply by showing a picture, the craftsmen will make the *keben* according to the wishes of the customers. This communication is closely intertwined between the crafter groups without ever claiming that the motifs created belong to a certain group of craftsmen and the various motif designs that developed into the collective identity of the Kayubihhi village craftsmen. As a form of community commitment through artisan groups to always maintain the noble culture of Bali so that it does not become extinct. All traditional and religious activities are carried out following the uniqueness and original cultural values (Karuni & Suardana, 2018).

Vernacular typography on the *keben* created by the craftsmen of Kayubihhi village is an inseparable part of the various *keben* described in Table 1. The vernacular typography design of the *keben* motif in the manufacturing process is always combined with various motifs tailored to the customers' tastes. Vernacular typography design with *keben* motif is designed not based on design rules because it is a form of visual communication that is not limited by theory. The natural shape follows the instincts of the *keben* who made it and is easy to understand (Hermanto, 2019).

Although they were made without paying attention to design standards, the *keben* craftsmen have sensitivity in arranging the designs of these motifs so that they can be arranged well on the entire surface of the *keben* in various shapes and sizes. According to Ni Nengah Adnyani (37 years), one of the *keben* craftsmen from Br Bangklet Kayubihhi in an interview in December 2021, the vernacular typography design of the *keben* can be applied differently according to the size of the *keben*. *Kebe*n measuring 40 cm can contain a maximum number of 12 types of letters. *Kebe*n measuring 30 cm can contain a maximum number of 8 types of letters. *Kebe*n measuring 20 cm can contain a maximum number of 5 types of letters. *Kebe*n with

this motif generally forms a word order as the identity of the name of the owner of the *keben*, presented in Figure 1.



Figure 1. *Kebe*n of various sizes with vernacular typography designs arranged to form a name identity. Source: Document of Desi, 2021

According to the Kayubihhi village craftsman, I Wayan Swadi (49 years), *kebe*n with vernacular typography motifs are currently the most popular with buyers before the holiday because most of the religious ritual traditions in Bali use *kebe*n as a place for praying. This causes the *kebe*n brought to potentially be confused with someone else's. Adding a name identical to the *kebe*n, of course, helps the *kebe*n owner to identify his *kebe*n so that it is not confusing. To add aesthetic value, these *kebe*ns are then arranged by combining geometric motif designs and attractive colors according to the customer's tastes. *Kebe*n with vernacular typography designs is becoming a trend among the public and can be ordered for souvenirs and gifts.

The *kebe*n craftsmen have expertise in arranging woven patterns in forming vernacular typography motif designs to convey communication messages to the viewer. Although the craftsmen in *Kayubihhi* village do not receive formal design education, they have creative ways to make it

easier for the craftsmen to be creative. The first step taken by the *keben* craftsmen of Kayubihi village in making the vernacular typography design for the *keben* is to make a guide first. This guide consists of an arrangement of alphabetical letters made in one sheet of woven bamboo and the finished product as a reference in weaving *keben* as presented in Figure 2.



Figure 2. The alphabetical arrangement of the *keben* motif with vernacular typography as a reference for craftsmen in Kayubihi village
Source: Document of Desi, 2021

The creativity carried out by the *keben* craftsmen of Kayubihi village by making references to weaving techniques to form vernacular typographic designs has opportunities for the creation of digital typefaces. However, in the process, the vernacular typography motif designs created by the craftsmen of the Kayubihi village were analyzed first using the design typography principles consisting of Legibility, Readability, Visibility, and Clarity to determine the level of readability, the interaction of letter motifs on the *keben* to the space and visual elements around it as a reinforcement for digital typeface creation.

The Legibility Principle

Legibility is related to the quality of the letters in their ease of being recognized or read (Sihombing, 2015:165). The form of the vernacular typography design of the *keben* motifs with woven techniques in the principle of legibility is easy to recognize

and can be distinguished from one letter to another, made in the form of an uppercase (capital letter) presented in Figure 1.

The legibility principle of the vernacular typography design of *Keбен* motifs of Kayubihi village is determined by the width of the bamboo strands used for weaving. The thinner the woven bamboo strands, the easier the vernacular typography of the *keben* motif can be recognized and read. The shape of the woven pattern with small and tight fiber widths or known as *sisit geles* can also affect producing a consistent letter shape. In Figure 3, the design of the vernacular typography motif with the *Sisit Geles* weaving technique can produce letter shapes that meet the legibility principle. The arrangement of the letters that make up the word BU BINTANG is clearly legible, each letter can be recognized and easily distinguished from one letter to another. This shows that the design of vernacular typographic motifs has the opportunity to be developed into new types of typefaces by adopting the weaving technique of Kayubihi village craftsmen which is digitally adapted with adjustments.

The Readability Principle

Readability is related to the ease and convenience of reading the information in a layout (Sihombing, 2015:165). The readability principle of the *Keбен* motif is very strong because it is supported by the application of the figure and ground aspects that are set on the surface of the *keben* focused on one flat surface. The craftsmen of Kayubihi village can visualize the readability principle by applying the figure-ground aspect.

The figure-ground aspect, as shown in Figure 3, shows that two spaces provide a stimulus for the viewing eye to be able to distinguish between the color combination of the motif as the background and the identity text of the name BU BINTANG as a figure made as if there is a separation of space emphasized by the presence of a rectangle line as a frame without compromising the principle of unity. The figures and

the setting support each other so that the informational text presented can be easily and comfortably read without dominating the others. This is reinforced by the application of the figure-ground principle to be able to separate the figure in the form of BU BINTANG text (see Figure 3) with a black and red color combination background which can be identified by separating the text part as a figure and the color part as a ground so that the legibility is getting stronger.



Figure 3. The vernacular typography design of *keben* motifs of Kayubihi village meets the principles of typographic design. Source: Document of Desi, 2021

The text of BU BINTANG on the *keben*, as shown in Figure 3, is easy and comfortable to read because the use of contrasting colors between the figure and the background is very clearly visible. The application of two black and white colors, as shown in Figure 4, shows that the readability principle can be achieved optimally. The text of BU DANTA written on the surface of the *keben* (Figure 4) can easily be recognized and read. This further emphasizes that with their traditional skills, the *keben* craftsmen in Kayubihi village have been able to apply design principles through self-taught learning through repeated verbal learning, and through various trials and errors to create vernacular motif designs that develop at the moment.

The Visibility Principle

The visibility principle relates to the ease with which text can be read at a certain distance. This can be proven by the shape of the character letters created by the craftsmen in Kayubihi village with a weaving technique that gives a firm, strong impression with a composition of balanced and proportional letter sizes in their placement on the surface of the *keben*. So that the information presented can be easily read from a certain distance. The success of applying the visibility principle of *Kebeen* motifs is strongly influenced by the small width of the woven fiber used and the density of the weaving technique, resulting in a woven pattern of the vernacular typography design that is detailed, smooth, and neat.

The text of BU DANTA as part of the vernacular typographic design of the *keben* motif shown in Figure 4 contains information on the name of BU DANTA as the identity of the owner of the *keben* and has met the visibility principle well. There is a color contrast with a black background that affects the readability of the information text if it is read at a certain distance.



Figure 4. The vernacular typography design of *keben* motifs of Kayubihi village meets the principles of typographic design. Source: Document of Desi, 2021

The Clarity Principle

The clarity principle relates to the quality of letters and text in their function as a means of delivering messages so that they can be understood clearly. The arran-

gement of letters forms the word BU DAN-TA in Figure 4, able to clearly communicate the identity of the owner of the *keben*, and the shape of the letters is easy to recognize and distinguish from one another. The motifs as decorations and the letter characters arranged into informational text in a *keben* appear to form a unified whole, harmonious and functioning well as a sign of identification/identity of the owner of the *keben*.

The successful application of the principles of Legibility, Readability, Visibility, and Clarity is strongly influenced by the weaving technique in making *keben* which depends on the process of making and forming bamboo fibers through several stages. Weaving is a technique in making crafts by crossing woven materials consisting of warp and weft, similar to the weaving technique. Warp, as the basic material for woven and weft, is a woven medium that is inserted into the warp (Surya & Mutmaniah, 2015).

The bamboo material used by the Kayubihi village craftsmen in making *keben* is a type of rope bamboo or *tiing tali/tiing tiantan* (Bali) (*Gigantochloa apus* (JA & JH Schultes) Kurz). A bamboo rope has the characteristics of upright stems and dense clumps, with a trunk diameter of 7-12 cm, a wall thickness of 11-14 mm, and a height of 14-16 meters (Yeny et al., 2015:15). A bamboo rope was chosen as the raw material for making *keben/sokasi* by the craftsmen of Kayubihi village because the walls of the reed are thick, the bamboo reeds are easy to blade/*disisit* (Bali), durable, and flexible, and not easily broken so that they can form various forms of woven products and all parts can be used (Arinasa & Peneng, 2013:46).

For the craftsmen in *Kayubihi* village, the weaving stage requires skill, patience, and thoroughness to produce a qualified *keben*. The technique of making *keben* with bamboo rope by Kayubihi village craftsmen is carried out in two stages; the first stage is the preparation of woven raw materials by processing bamboo first. The second stage is weaving the raw materials into *keben* with various vernacular typo-

graphic motifs.

The process of making a vernacular typography design with a *keben* motif begins with making the base/pad/*useh* (Bali) as a ready-to-weave *ulatan*/sheet, which is presented in Figure 5. The *keben* used by the craftsmen of Kayubihi village is the *sok jampel/ulat isi* weaving technique. *Sok jampel/ulat isi* technique is done by weaving *ulatan* in a tilted position/*ngandang* (Bali). Through this stage, various motif designs can be created (see Table 1) and can be combined with vernacular typography motifs containing information on the identity of the *keben* owner.

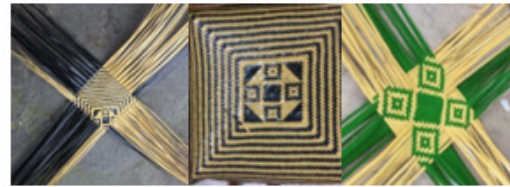


Figure 5. Basic Weaving Technique of *keben*/Ulatan Source: Document of Desi, 2021

The craftsmen carry out weaving techniques in making vernacular typographic designs of *keben* motifs using special techniques, especially in arranging letters that form words. Make the bottom part of the *keben* using a weaving technique from left to right, like writing on paper, see Figure 6. Meanwhile, to make the lid, make the last letter upside down, see Figure 7. The *keben* craftsmen also have a formula for making vernacular typographic motifs. Making one type of letter motif takes five strands/segment, except the letter T spends six strands/segment. Letter I spends three strands/segment, and letter V, Y spends four strands/segment. By knowing this formula, the craftsmen can easily arrange the motifs of these letters into a word that usually contains the name of the *keben* owner with a proportional and balanced division of fields.



Figure 6. The technique of weaving a *keben* base with vernacular typographic motifs
Source: Document of Desi, 2021



Figure 7. The technique of weaving a *keben* lid with vernacular typographic motifs
Source: Document of Desi, 2021

The presence of vernacular typographic designs with *keben* motifs of Kayubihi village is always combined with various types of geometric motif designs to add to the aesthetic value of the *keben* and adjust to the customer’s tastes. The various types of motif designs produced by the *keben* craftsmen of the Kayubihi village are done using traditional weaving techniques, which can be categorized into two types, namely: 1) The motif design in the form of Latin letters that reads A-Z can be categorized into a letter type without hooks/*san serif* with characteristic no *serif*/hooks/*fins* at the ends of the letters, with the same thickness and giving the impression of being modern, efficient, contemporary as shown in Figures 3, 4, 6 and 7 (Sihombing, 2015:160). 2).

Geometric motif designs as aesthetic elements that adorn the surface of the *keben* can be categorized into decorative typefaces created from patterns of woven lines to form motifs, as presented in Table 1 (Sihombing, 2015:185). These two catego-

ries of motif types can be developed in the creation of digital typefaces.

Based on interviews with several competent sources, they found that various types of motif designs created by the *keben* craftsmen in Kayubihi village were used as decorations to improve the aesthetics of *keben* so that the product was in demand by buyers. *Kebeen* motif design as a result of collective creativity, forms a distinctive identity of Kayubihi village craftsmen created through weaving techniques passed down through habits without being documented and recorded (Yeny et al., 2015:60). Therefore, documentation and recording of various vernacular typographic motif designs are required in Kayubihi village in digital form. The tradition of weaving bamboo carried out by the Kayubihi village community can be categorized as an intangible cultural heritage included in the category of traditional crafts, playing an important role as a defense medium for existing cultural diversity (Idris et al., 2016).

Table 1. Vernacular typography design of *kebeen* motifs by Kayubihi village craftsmen have opportunities as digital typefaces in the form of decorative letters.

Motif Design	Design Development
1. Sun (Figure 8)	The motifs of sun, square sun, swastika sun, and connected sun
2. Flowers (Figure 9)	The motifs of <i>lantinglanda</i> , <i>kedukduk</i> , and <i>seroni</i> . The motifs of jasmine, Sakura, and Hermes.
3. Traditional Fabrics (Figure 10)	The motifs of Rang-Rang, Poleng, and Songket.
4. Object of things (Figure 11)	The motif of a windmill, chess, sari chess, candles, and ceramics.
5. Balinese Hindu Religious Cultural Symbols (Figure 12)	The motifs of Swastika and tamiang



Figure 8. Vernacular Typography Design in Sun motifs Source: Document of Desi, 2021



Figure 9. Vernacular Typography Design in Flower motifs Source: Document of Desi, 2021



Figure 10. Vernacular Typography Design in Traditional Fabric motifs Source: Document of Desi, 2021



Figure 11. Vernacular Typography Design in Object of thing motifs Source: Document of Desi, 2021

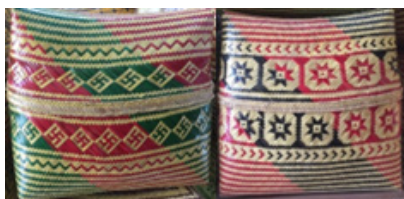


Figure 12. Vernacular Typography Design in Balinese Hindu cultural symbol motifs Source: Document of Desi, 2021

The Meaning of Keben in Kayubihi Village

The semiotics approach by Ferdinand de Saussure is used to reveal the meaning of *keben* made by the Kayubihi village craftsmen because of the associational relationship between the signified and the signifier. *Keben* with a vernacular typographic design motif as a sign because of the unity of the signifier and the signified. *Keben* dengan motif desain tipografi vernacular sebagai tanda karena adanya kesatuan dari penanda (*signifier*) dan petanda (*signified*).

A signifier is “meaningful scribbles” produced through a weaving technique to form a letter arrangement into a word as the identity of the *keben* owner followed by geometric motifs classified into five groups as described in Table 1, in the form of an image of a woven motif design, which can be read and seen as shown in the figure below. Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3, and Figure 4 are assembled into a unified whole with a vernacular typographic design. At the same time, a signified is a “concept description” behind various types of motif designs for the *Kayubihi* Village (Felix, 2020) which can be interpreted from the concept of creativity, cultural preservation, and identity.

The meaning of creativity, according to Csikszentmihalyi in Piliang (2019:62), refers to the social and cultural domain in it; some people express unusual thoughts with new, original, fresh, enlightening perspectives and can fundamentally change the existing culture. The craftsmen of Kayubihi village in creating vernacular typographic designs with *keben* attach the meaning of creativity through thoughts that generate new ideas in the form of a *keben* which is a pictogram or visual language as a form of expression that describes the harmonious relationship between humans and nature, humans and others, and humans with the creator known with the term *Trihitakarana* in Balinese Hindu culture (Saragi, 2018). The *keben* motif as a result of the creativity of the Kayubihi village craftsmen was created because of

the three pillars of creativity according to Csikszentmihalyi in Piliang (2019:63). First, *domain*, in the form of procedures, symbolic methods, or knowledge in processing and weaving bamboo which is a cultural tradition of the Kayubihi village community passed down directly from generation to generation through a process inherited by parents (mother) in filling their spare time by weaving. In this process, there is an intense interaction between humans and bamboo, generating bamboo weaving knowledge and skills (Yeny et al., 2015:60). Second, *field*, all individuals consisting of craftsmen, government, culturalists, and communities are tasked with maintaining and preserving the domain and deciding whether an idea or new product can be included in the domain so that Kayubihi village becomes a center for woven bamboo crafts which is quite famous in Bali. Three, *person*, in this case, the craftsmen individually recognize natural resources, and culture in the form of symbols that exist in a domain and then created to produce new ideas, systems, principles, forms, or patterns in creating various typographic designs with *keben*. These three pillars are the result of the creativity of the *keben* in Kayubihi village in creating new motif designs, and innovations in the form of *keben* being able to grow and develop until now.

The meaning of preservation is related to efforts to maintain the local cultural heritage of the Kayubihi village community in the form of woven bamboo crafts for a long time and sustainably with the aim of not becoming extinct (Mubarat & Junoko, 2021). The existence of bamboo crafts/*keben* in Kayubihi village is currently still in demand because it is closely related to the cultural traditions and religious rituals of Hindus in Bali (Putra et al., 2019:3). Motivation, enthusiasm, tenacity, and being supported by creative individuals are the capital for craftsmen to continue to be creative, innovate, and produce various types of *keben* motif designs to maintain the art of bamboo crafts in modernization and globalization. The creativity and innovation continuously carried out by the *keben*

craftsmen in Kayubihi village always adhere to socio-cultural values because the *keben* created is closely related to the socio-cultural of the Balinese people and is affirmative by accepting new ideas to develop *keben* crafts, making the dynamics of innovation and tempo of change very quickly (Piliang, 2019:63), so that in a short time there are always new motif designs created. This shows the conservation efforts made by the *keben* craftsmen to maintain the art of bamboo crafts as a cultural heritage and become the characteristic/identity of Kayubihi village.

The meaning of cultural identity in the vernacular typography design of the *keben* motif as part of Indonesian national culture can be in the form of processes and products. *Keбен* as a cultural process forms a cultural identity that can be reflected through the creative thinking of the *keбен* craftsmen through their intelligence, openness, creative spirit, discipline, full of imagination, fantasy, sensitivity, love for what they do, ability to produce various weaving techniques as a skill which can continue to be inherited as intangible local cultural wisdom. Meanwhile, *keбен* as a product of handicraft culture has a role in the traditions of the Balinese people, namely as a place for prayer facilities and traditional ceremonies as local cultural wisdom in the form of objects (Setyawan & Dopo, 2020). The presence of a vernacular typography design as a *keбен* motif with its characteristics in the socio-cultural life of the Balinese people functions as the identity of the *keбен* owner and represents a certain social status in society. Balinese people, in carrying out religious ceremonies always use various ceremonial facilities; a person's social status is determined based on the ceremonial facilities used (Karuni & Suardana, 2018).

Through this research, it is hoped that the public, especially the younger generation, can recognize various types of vernacular typography design of *keбен* motifs that can be used as references to continue to innovate to produce various creative works while preserving *keбен* with distinc-

tive motifs and traditional weaving techniques. This research also contributes to the development of the creative industry with local cultural nuances that can compete in the global creative industry arena. From the creative industry perspective, woven bamboo handicrafts are part of the art of craft and design that have the potential to be developed into various types of products (Hendriyana et al., 2020). *Keben* crafts as part of the creative industry will always develop as long as there is creativity and innovation in it (Yeny et al., 2015:52).

CONCLUSION

The vernacular typography design of the *keben* motif has a distinctive visualization, character, and the opportunity to be developed and utilized in the form of other cultural products. The form of development and utilization of the vernacular typography design of the *keben* motif can be done by exploring the visual form of the *keben* motifs into digital typefaces that are full of elements of local culture through Visual Communication Design.

The uniqueness and detail of the design of the *keben* motif has the potential to be digitally adapted as a new typeface by highlighting the local cultural wisdom of the Kayubihi village craftsmen who are part of Balinese society. This can be interpreted from the concept of creativity, cultural preservation, and identity that can be used as a source of inspiration for the younger generation to work based on local cultural wisdom. This local cultural wisdom is indigenous creativity, which represents local Balinese cultural identity and must be preserved as a form of appreciation for local values to enrich aesthetics in digital form and a strengthen of the cultural identity of the Indonesian nation. This creativity can be used as a source of inspiration in the creation of typefaces that offer novelty and as a form of preserving values and cultural artifacts that exist in society so that they can continue to be enjoyed by the next generation.

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