

Purun Bag Crafts: Bridging Rural-Urban Divides Through Value-Added Marketing

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Abstract

Previous research on the Purun plant (*Lepironia articulata*) reveals its traditional applications, commercial possibilities, and climate change mitigation potential. Additional research on Purun urban-rural links is needed to strengthen the regional economies of the South Kalimantan, Indonesia, wetlands. Rural and urban South Kalimantan wetlands are economically, socially, and environmentally linked. These connections can help Purun bag women's businesses prosper economically. These links can empower women by making and selling Purun bags with value. Marketing management evaluated the mutual benefits rural and urban areas get from their linkage. The goal was to demonstrate how value-added marketing can improve Purun crafts' rural-urban relations. Digital marketing helps urban and rural women sell colorful Purun bag crafts and make additional revenue. This paper examined (1) urban-rural linkages in producing and marketing value-added Purun bags, (2) the feasibility and profitability of disadvantaged urban women in South Kalimantan wetlands producing them, and (3) Purun bag women entrepreneurs' challenges and opportunities. Using surveys, FGDs, and 22 participant interviews, a questionnaire collected demographics, production, marketing, and income data. Policymakers, local authorities, and other stakeholders were interviewed semi-structured. Secondary data were gathered from relevant literature, papers, and government statistics. The initiative taught impoverished women to create Purun bags with value. Through product design and marketing, the study may help women entrepreneurs earn more and live better. This study promotes sustainable development by utilizing locally available materials and reducing the environmental impact of production and transportation. Finally, it can preserve cultural treasures and handicrafts.

Keywords: purun, South Kalimantan, urban-rural linkage, value-added marketing, wetland.

1. Introduction

In South Kalimantan, a province of Indonesia, some plants grow wild near water or peat swamps, namely Purun (*Lepironia articulata*). Purun is a typical swamp area plant with an erect stem, unbranched segments, and a shiny green color (Figure 1). This plant has fiber, and the texture is quite firm. People use it as a traditional handicraft material (Turang and Turang 2021).



Figure 1. Purun plant (*Lepironia articulata*) in Kalimantan (Photo credit: Suryono in Mawas Program, 2023)

Wetland dwellers, especially women, typically have local knowledge of Purun handicrafts in South Kalimantan. They use Purun plants to create agricultural equipment, bags, mats, and caps. Purun plants can also be processed into a variety of charming crafts.

Previous research on Purun provides insights into the traditional uses (e.g., Pratiwi et al., 2021), economic potential (e.g., Albushairi et al., 2021), and climate change mitigation potential (e.g., Muhammad et al., 2020). However, there is still a need for more research on Purun, including its urban-rural linkages that can potentially produce new knowledge on how to support the resilience of the regional economies of South Kalimantan.

Furthermore, a research gap regarding cultural and social aspects needs to be addressed. Urban-rural linkages research in Indonesia has often focused on economic and environmental elements, neglecting these linkages' cultural and social dimensions. There is a need to understand the role of traditional knowledge and artistic practices, such as Purun craft in the wetlands of South Kalimantan, in shaping urban-rural linkages.

Integrated rural-urban linkages refer to the connections and interdependence between urban and rural areas. These linkages can create economic growth and development opportunities for women entrepreneurs. One example of how these linkages can be leveraged to empower women is by creating and selling value-added Purun bags.

There is a lack of research integrating multiple disciplines in the study of urban-rural linkages in wetlands in Indonesia. This study fills the gap of limited interdisciplinary research. Urban-rural linkages research in wetlands requires a multidisciplinary approach that combines knowledge from different fields, such as economics, sociology, and management.

While rural areas provide the raw materials and labor for Purun handicrafts, urban areas are often the main markets for these products. The current study argues that value-added marketing can help bridge the gap between rural and urban communities by creating mutually beneficial relationships.

The purpose of this paper was to explore (1) The role of urban-rural linkages in producing and

marketing value-added Purun bags, (2) The feasibility and profitability of producing value-added Purun bags by disadvantaged urban women in South Kalimantan wetlands, (3) Challenges and opportunities faced by Purun bag women entrepreneurs.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Resource-Based Theory

The Resource-Based Theory (RBT) serves as a foundational framework. This theory elucidates the strategic significance of resources and capabilities in shaping a region's performance and competitive advantage. In the Purun Bag Crafts context, RBT offers a lens to analyze the diverse resources embedded within the rural community's craftsmanship and the urban market's demand for value-added products. The tangible resources encompass the natural abundance of the South Kalimantan wetlands, including the raw materials crucial for crafting Purun bags, alongside the skilled artisans proficient in traditional weaving techniques. Intangible resources, such as cultural heritage and community networks, also play a pivotal role in enriching the value proposition of Purun bags.

The resource-based theory offers a valuable lens through which to examine a region's strategic capabilities and competitive advantage. According to Conner (1991), from a resource-based perspective, discerning appropriate inputs is ultimately a matter of entrepreneurial vision and intuition; however, the creative act underlying such vision has not been the primary focus of resource-based theory development to date. The primary reason that there are entrepreneurial opportunities is that various agents have differing opinions regarding the relative value of resources when they are transformed from inputs into outputs (Kirzner 1983; Schumpeter 1934; Shane and Venkataraman 2000).

Indonesian women will likely support their husbands in earning a living (Hardiyanti, Firman, and Rusdinal 2019). Alvarez and Busenitz (2001) acknowledged it as potential women entrepreneurs' cognitive ability or creativity. Entrepreneurs possess individual resources that facilitate the identification of new opportunities and the accumulation of venture resources.

2.2 Rural-Urban Linkage

Rural and urban areas of South Kalimantan wetlands are interconnected economically, socially, and environmentally. These linkages can create economic growth and development opportunities for Purun bag women entrepreneurs. They can also be leveraged to empower women by creating and selling value-added Purun bags.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of rural-urban interdependence in economic development. For example, Wu and Li (2010) argue that rural-urban interdependence can help increase economic growth and reduce poverty in rural and urban areas. They suggest that rural areas can benefit from urban markets and technology while urban areas can benefit from the resources and labor provided by rural areas.

Value-added marketing has also been identified as a strategy for creating mutual benefits between rural and urban communities. Value-added products are processed or modified to

increase their value through branding or packaging. It can create a niche market for the product and increase its price, benefiting producers and consumers. A study by Jha and Singh (2013) on value-added marketing of handicrafts in India found that it can create a sustainable livelihood for rural artisans and increase their income. The study also found that value-added marketing can help preserve traditional handicrafts and promote cultural heritage.

In the current study, the different mutual benefits rural and urban areas derive from their linkage were analyzed from the marketing management perspective. In the context of the Purun Bag crafts in South Kalimantan, value-added marketing can mutually benefit rural and urban communities. By creating a niche market for the crafts in urban areas, the rural community can increase its income and promote its cultural heritage. At the same time, urban consumers can access unique products and support sustainable development in rural areas.

In rural areas of South Kalimantan, Purun raw materials are obtained on rice farms managed by residents—many residents cultivate Lake Purun (a type of Purun plant) in their yards. In addition, some rural residents buy from Purun seekers in various fields. In Figure 2, rural residents in wetland areas are used to looking for Purun plants in swamps by boat (Wahid 2023).

One of the villages in the rural area, Pulantani Village, Haur Gading District, North Hulu Sungai Regency, South Kalimantan Province, its residents manage the Purun pounding machine (Wati 2022). They received the Purun plant pounding tool from the Department of Industry, Trade, and Cooperative of North Hulu Sungai Regency. This machine makes it easier for artisans to pound Purun plants, especially for members of the Joint Business Group (KUB) of Purun production. Before using a Purun pounding machine, Purun artisans in rural areas manually pounded purun plants, which required more energy and time.



Figure 2. Purun plants in swamps (Photo credit: Wati, 2022)

In another rural area, Pulantani Village, artisans continue improving handicraft products by having training to improve products and innovate (Wati 2022). In addition, Purun artisans

network to get more orders from outside the region, from Kalimantan Island and Jawa Island. As long as there are many Purun available in the swamps of Pulantani Village, artisans are pretty safe in getting this primary raw material and cultivating Purun plants.

A Purun woven craftswoman can process two sheets of Purun mats with a size of 2.40x80 centimeters daily. In addition, a craftswoman can weave a Purun basket. Various forms of woven Purun crafts, such as wallets, drink bottle holders, and bags, are made in rural areas. In rural areas, artisan groups have been formed, including Anyaman Bahalap (Wahid 2023) and Berkat Ilahi (Wati 2022). There is also a Purun woven sales place that buyers from urban areas can visit and purchase. The results of Purun craftsmanship are displayed in display cabinets, and regular customers from urban areas have ordered most of the woven Purun.

3. Research Method

Research Design. An intervention group consisted of disadvantaged urban women who received training on producing and marketing value-added Purun bags. The research design enabled the identification of causality between the intervention and the outcomes.

Sample Selection. A multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample. First, the study area was divided into rural and urban areas. Then, purposive sampling was used to select the disadvantaged women who intended to support household income. The sample for this study was selected from urban women living in disadvantaged areas of South Kalimantan wetlands.

Urban participants were recruited through community organizations. A total of 30 participants were selected for the study, namely homemakers in the urban area of Banjarmasin who were members of the Savings and Loans Group in Andai River. Some of those women had difficulty making ends meet. Various efforts have been made to increase family income, such as selling food, pastries, clothes, cosmetics, et cetera. One of the proposed efforts by participating in this study was to increase expertise through training in making crafts from Purun woven.

Data Collection. Primary data were collected through surveys, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and participant interviews—a questionnaire collected demographics, production, marketing, and income data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including policymakers, local authorities, and other stakeholders. FGDs were held with the participants to explore their experiences and perceptions of the intervention. Secondary data were collected from relevant literature, reports, and government statistics. The data collection process was conducted in two stages: pre-intervention and post-intervention.

Intervention. The intervention involved training disadvantaged women to make value-added Purun bags. They received training in designing and producing high-quality bags of raw Purun woven by rural artisans. A woman artisan of purun woven, Ms. Siti Mariyana, the owner of a purun production in a rural area named Al Firdaus, was selected to train those urban women study participants. Ms. Mariyana came from 'Purun Village' located in Palam Village, Cempaka, Banjar Baru District. The village was called 'Purun Village' because of the region's large number of Purun artisans. Furthermore, marketing specialists gave the sample study several trainings on branding, pricing, and marketing strategies. The current study used both

quantitative descriptive and qualitative methods.

4. Finding and Discussion

Based on initial interviews and expert opinions, adding value instead of Purun woven making was decided. It is because it usually takes decades to learn to make Purun woven. Residents of rural areas are skillful in making Purun woven because of the results of learning from generations of families, from their parents, their parents from their grandparents, who learned from their great-grandparents (Wahid 2023).

The participants, who were initially 30, were reduced to 21 and were willing to take the pre-test. Pre-test material consists of knowledge about Purun and its processing and expertise related to social media, in this case, *Facebook*. Pre-test activities were considered necessary as a selection of participants' interest in participating in a series of training activities to empower a sustainable economy.

The post-test was conducted a few months later. The number of participants was different during the pre-and post-tests because not all pre-test participants were present at the post-test. The number of disadvantaged urban women participating in this economic empowerment program also naturally decreased. Survived participants were still interested in participating in several value-added Purun training.

Generally, the percentage of participants who answered correctly on the post-test is greater than the pre-test score. It shows that the participants were able to capture the content of the training. Another result, in terms of skills, was a significant improvement.

Plain Purun bags produced by artisans in rural areas cost only around IDR 20K. Nevertheless, after decorating, the price can reach IDR130K. The value-added Purun bag was done by varnishing to make it shiny and more durable, making rosebuds/flowers from ribbon, sewn rosebuds on the bag, and then decorating the bag with florets, leaves, and other decorations (Figure 3).



Figures 3. Decorated purun bags

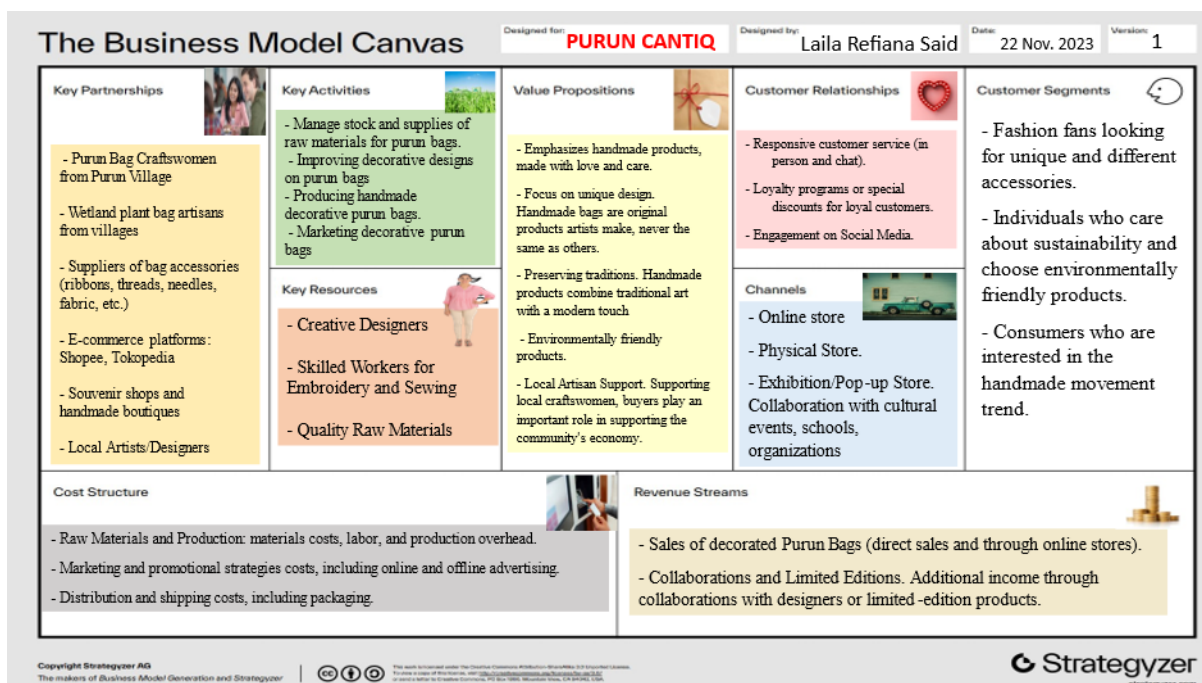
Participants were enthusiastic about the training, even ordering plain Purun bags from rural areas to decorate as practices outside the training schedule. Then, in the second stage of training, participants were divided into two groups. The first group was still learning to decorate Purun bags with ribbons. The second group learned to make upholstery on the inside of the bag.

Encouragingly, some of the bags made by the trainees have been sold. Some trainees also continued to order plain Purun bags from rural areas to practice decorating themselves. The number of orders for plain Purun bags from artisans in rural areas was relatively significant. Participants continued to decorate purun bags in their homes after the training.

Some participants were also interested in marketing their value-added Purun bags through local e-catalogs owned by the Banjarmasin City Government. This local e-catalog is an online shopping application developed by the Regional Government procurement policy agency. This application provides various products from various communities that the regional government needs. In the digital era, Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise (MSME) actors, including Purun bag artisans, must adapt to digital systems, such as e-catalogs, to promote their products.

Furthermore, the third stage of training on marketing through social media or Facebook was carried out by marketing experts from Lambung Mangkurat University and marketing practitioners. After the third training session, most could decorate Purun bags and understand how to market them digitally. About ten participants had more prominent creative abilities in decorating purun than the rest. Finally, the ten participant urban women formed a forum for entrepreneurship activities, namely Purun Cantiq (the Pretty Purun) and also at the same time as the brand name of their products.

Purun Cantiq, led by urban women entrepreneurs in South Kalimantan, presents a compelling case study within the Business Model Canvas (BMC) (Figure 4). This innovative venture integrates traditional Purun weaving techniques with contemporary design aesthetics, offering a unique value proposition to domestic and international markets. At the core of the BMC lies the value proposition, where Purun Cantiq distinguishes itself by blending cultural heritage with modern style, appealing to consumers seeking authentic, ethically sourced fashion accessories. This value proposition aligns with the customer segments, encompassing diverse individuals interested in sustainable fashion, artisanal craftsmanship, and cultural authenticity.



Figures 4. Business Model Canvas of Purun Cantiq

Key activities within the BMC revolve around product development, weaving workshops, and marketing initiatives to raise awareness of Purun Cantiq's brand and mission. These activities leverage the expertise of local artisans, who play a central role in preserving traditional weaving techniques while adapting them to contemporary tastes. Additionally, strategic partnerships with local cooperatives and NGOs support community empowerment initiatives and ensure a sustainable supply chain.

Purun Cantiq's revenue streams are from selling handcrafted Purun bags, accessories, and merchandise online and through retail partnerships. The venture maximizes its reach and revenue potential by employing a direct-to-consumer model via e-commerce platforms and participating in artisan markets and fashion expos. Furthermore, the BMC emphasizes cost structures that prioritize fair wages for artisans, sustainable sourcing of materials, and investments in marketing and product innovation to maintain competitive advantage and long-term viability.

Customer relationships are cultivated through personalized shopping experiences, storytelling, and engagement with Purun Cantiq's brand narrative, fostering loyalty and advocacy among a growing customer base. Moreover, channels such as social media, word-of-mouth referrals, and collaborations with influencers amplify the brand's visibility and impact. Through a holistic approach to the BMC, Purun Cantiq generates economic value and contributes to social empowerment, cultural preservation, and environmental sustainability, embodying the principles of conscious entrepreneurship in the dynamic landscape of South Kalimantan's creative economy.

This study potentially creates a more inclusive and equitable value chain that links rural and urban areas, enabling women to participate in market-driven economic activities. However, a few limitations of this study that should be addressed include a lack of discussion on social entrepreneurship-related policies. Women-led social enterprises can be critical in tackling poverty and promoting sustainable development in urban and rural areas.

This study also potentially touches on gender-sensitive policies. Thus, further study should discuss gender-sensitive policies and programs that can help address gender-based discrimination and empower women entrepreneurs. These policies may include affirmative action, equal pay for equal work, and access to credit. Such policies can help bridge the urban-rural divide by ensuring that women entrepreneurs in both areas have equal opportunities to succeed.

5. Conclusion

This study shows increased incomes for women entrepreneurs in urban and rural areas. It also gives women in urban areas insights into job opportunities, particularly in the design and marketing sectors. It promotes sustainable development by utilizing locally available materials and reducing the environmental impact of production and transportation. It also contributes to preserving traditional handicrafts and cultural heritage.

The purpose of this paper was to explore (1) The role of urban-rural linkages in producing and marketing value-added Purun bags, (2) The feasibility and profitability of producing value-added Purun bags by underprivileged urban women in South Kalimantan wetlands, (3) Challenges and opportunities faced by Purun bag women entrepreneurs.

(1) The role of urban-rural linkages in producing and marketing value-added Purun bags

The role of urban-rural linkages in producing and marketing value-added Purun bags is pivotal in harnessing the potential of this traditional craft and transforming it into a sustainable economic opportunity. These linkages connect urban markets with rural artisans, enabling the exchange of knowledge, resources, and market access. Urban centers provide a ready consumer base and avenues for product diversification, while rural communities contribute their traditional skills and eco-friendly raw materials.

(2) The feasibility and profitability of producing value-added Purun bags by disadvantaged urban women in South Kalimantan wetlands

The feasibility and profitability of producing value-added Purun bags by disadvantaged urban women in South Kalimantan wetlands hold significant promise. These women, often facing economic hardships, possess a wealth of untapped talent and local knowledge that can be harnessed to create high-quality, eco-friendly Purun bags. The wetlands of South Kalimantan provide a readily available source of raw materials, making production cost-effective. Moreover, these value-added Purun bags have the potential to tap into niche markets that prioritize sustainable and handmade products. By providing training and empowering these disadvantaged urban women to engage in Purun bag production, they can improve their livelihoods and contribute to preserving local cultural heritage and the region's sustainable development. With the proper support, these women can become successful entrepreneurs in the burgeoning market for eco-conscious and artisanal products, ultimately improving their financial stability and social well-being.

In the case of this study, rural women artisans benefit from more markets and networks while also understanding the updated market taste of bags. Urban women benefit from value-added Purun production, and they can help support household income. This collaboration fosters economic empowerment of both rural and urban women, preserves cultural heritage, and promotes sustainable production practices. Moreover, it aligns with responsible and ethical consumption principles, as consumers increasingly seek unique, environmentally friendly products with a story to tell. Urban-rural linkages are crucial in elevating the value of Purun bags and sustaining the communities' livelihoods while promoting ecological consciousness. Purun Cantiq until now continues to produce.

(3) Challenges and opportunities faced by Purun Bag women entrepreneurs

Purun bag women entrepreneurs face unique challenges and opportunities in pursuing economic empowerment. Challenges often stem from limited resource access, including financial capital, market networks, and formal business training. Additionally, they struggle to balance their entrepreneurial activities with traditional household responsibilities—however, these challenges also open doors to opportunities. The resurgence of interest in eco-friendly, handmade products presents a growing market for Purun bags, and the unique cultural and artisanal qualities of these products can be a significant selling point. Collaborative efforts and support may come from organizations and government initiatives such as higher education institutions providing essential training and the Banjarmasin city government providing e-catalogs to market their products. Also, other sources provide funding and market access, turning these challenges into stepping stones for success. By overcoming these obstacles and embracing opportunities, Purun bag women entrepreneurs can improve their economic prospects and contribute to the sustainable development of their communities and the preservation of a traditional craft with cultural significance.

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