

## **THE ADAPTATION OF NATURE IN IBAN CULTURAL ARTEFACT**

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### **Abstract**

Iban or also known as Sea Dayak has inhabited the island of Borneo for hundreds of years. From the previous timeline, the Iban community has adapted to their surrounding nature in developing their culture which is consisted of customs based on the foundation of ancestral beliefs. As a result, the development of Iban culture became more creative and innovative in producing cultural artifacts referring on surrounding nature. Incidentally, the cultural developed by the early Iban have become a legacy and identity for the modern Iban society today. Therefore, this paper is an ethnographic studies emphasis on human artifacts. Therefore, the scope of this studies discussed the researcher's proposed theory of the role of nature that has contribute to shaped human cultural artifacts, particularly the Iban cultural artifacts. This study applied qualitative methods and the research findings have concluded that nature have a significant function as a driving force to influenced early human culture and experience changes based on relevance and human preferences.

**Keywords:** Artifacts, Borneo, culture, human, Iban, Sarawak.

### **Introduction**

Cultural artifacts are a phrase used by Social Science to refer to an objects or man-made products that gives information regarding to the narrative of human culture. Specifically, cultural artifacts portrayed by human everyday life based on their creativity, spirits, and beliefs (Margolis & Laurence, 2007). In cultural semiotics, the precise definition was stated by Posner, he defined artifacts as the "intentional or unintentional consequences of human actions" (Posner, 2003). Generally, artifacts are an object that has been produced from the activities of human lives. For example, stone tools, bronze drums, bracelets, axes and ceramics. Evidence of the artifacts that has been found, had not only explain

events about human resources in various forms but the activities of human life and the cultural patterns that exists during ancient times. The factors of early existence of artifacts, was from life activities such as farming and hunting, which requires humans to create artifacts to make it easier for them to carry out such activities. In Malaysia, the creation of the artifacts technology was influenced by three-time system era, which is the Paleolithic, the Neolithic and the Bronze age era. Only then, the Proto Historical era started. Unlike other countries, which went through four different era phases that is the Paleolithic, the Mesolithic, the Neolithic, and the Bronze age era. Although, the prehistoric times doesn't have any writing system, the activities of the community however can be translated through the production of artifacts and cave paintings that was found. The difference between the Paleolithic and *Hoabinhian* community (prehistoric Hòa Bình culture of Southeast Asia) is that it can be seen through the usage of the *Liti tool* (artifact). Therefore, the historic creation of artifacts has been identified since the Paleolithic era (Zuliskandar, 2015).

### **Defination of Material Culture**

According to Flemming (1974), the object culture can be translated into various forms that includes objects, artifacts and things. However, the definition of cultural objects that is clear, refers to an object that was made and used by humans which was adapted into cultural contexts, beliefs and life values that forms the identity and sustainability of a community group. According to Dant (2007), material culture refers to the physical objects that is surrounded by humans and have its own meanings for the members of the community groups inside its culture. Sometimes, the material object is only to be gathered from nature surroundings, while the usage of such material sources has been produced into something that is useful, interesting or both. For example, clothes, tools, appliances, jewellery, pictures, furniture, buildings, and other equipment are the material cultures especially in disciplines such as archeology and anthropology that gives raw data to understand different community.

According to Hole, *et al.* (2000), the making of an artifact are one of the ways for humans to fulfill their basic needs to get food, shelter, and protection from any enemies. The ideas of the creation of artifacts, will always be changing according to the needs of human lives and will not be static. While according to Tuan (1980), artifacts are object that was made by humans based on their art and skills. The creation of artifacts is caused by experience, adaptation, as well as the environments. The characteristic of an artifacts is not large or in the form of a literature but something that is tangible and can be used by the human limbs. Besides that, artifacts are objects that was once used by humans in various functions. According to Nik Abdul Rahman (1985:496), artifacts are

material cultures that was made by human creations through their ways of thinking within the contexts of their environments. Existence of the artifacts in the culture are the intrinsic advancement in the development of traditional human civilization a long time ago. This matter is also discussed by Cottrell (1960), says that artifacts are evidence of narration to human in past times based on the discovery of remains like weapons, furniture, forts, jewelry and pottery. According to Jusoh (2010:43), every physical change that occurs on the physical appearance of the artifacts, either from the aspect of the decorative motif, material compositions, functions, manufacturing technologies and so on will indirectly shows the stages of progress which has been achieved by the community that produced the artifacts in question.

According to Habermas (2001), an artifact is a cultural object which is a part of the human living environment. The collection of cultural artifacts can be conceptualized as a basic culture, traditional media, and the changes in the evolution of human technology. Besides, artifacts have the ability to represent structure and the social life of humans in ritual and religious objects. According to Jais *et al.* (2007), artifacts are the result of human modification against natural materials like stones, soil, wood, metal and fiber materials in creating ideas, techniques and skills for living. However, this research has considered the cultural artifacts created by human intelligence and human experience based on the value and surrounding environment. This includes belief, self-protection, and communication. The evolution of cultural artifacts symbolized by the higher level of human intellectual through the progress of time while constantly being influence by the local nature.

## **The Iban**

Iban is one of the largest sub ethnics in Dayak community living in Sarawak (a part of Borneo Island). Sarawak were famous with epithet as the land of hornbills. Sarawak is a state located in northwest of the island of Borneo and overlooks the South China Sea. With an area of 124,450 square kilometres, Sarawak became the largest state in Malaysia. The extent of Sarawak covers about 48,000 square miles with a beach area. The topography of Sarawak consists of mountainous areas in the southeast and lowlands in the northwest of about 500 miles long and has altitude of between 2,500 to 4,000 feet above sea level. Sarawak border with Kalimantan, Indonesia, Brunei and Sabah. According to Vinson H. Sutlive Jr. (1992), the Iban community is a branch of the Dayak ethnic group inhabited the Borneo archipelago for a long time. During the British colonial era, they were recognised as the Sea Dayak and famous for head-hunting tradition to defend their territory. In addition, Payne (1986) explained the socio-cultural community of the Iban people inhabit the riverbank area and carried out their

activities to mature. Based on Pringle (1970), before the colonisation, the Iban community did not have specific term for identifying themselves like the current Iban community. However, the Iban will self-introduction themselves based on river they are currently settle in. For example, *kami ari Skrang* (we are Skrang) or *kami ari Undop* (we are Undop) even they will refer to "We of this area". If this method of identification still practices in the modern era by the Iban community in Sarawak. Now, Ibanic Dayak can be classified in two groups based on political geography: the first Ibanic who settled in Sarawak, Malaysia, namely *Balau, Remun, Sebuyau, Lemanak, Skrang, Undop, Saribas* and *Ulu Ai*. Second, is referring to Ibanic in West and East Kalimantan, Indonesia, namely *Mualang, Seberuang, Bugau, Kantu, Desa, Sebaruk* and *Banyur*. However, there are three main theories about the arrival of the Iban Community in Sarawak. The first theory established the arrival of the Iban people is from Tanjung Datu in Lundu. The second theory is also by referring to Sandin (1967: 3 & 26). The theory concluded the Iban migrated through *Merudu* Hill located near Brunei, and the third theory is the widely accepted in Iban community. The theory suggested that the Iban migration was from the Kapuas valley into Sarawak through the Kumpang area. This theory is based on the Iban community's oral traditions told from generation to generation with the journey of *Aki Lang Sengalang Burong* (God). *Aki Lang Sengalang Burong* had migrated from *Tampun Juah* and stopped in the area stated above.

## Methodology

This research is the final findings of the author doctoral thesis, in which the design of the research, was based on community ethnographic studies on the Iban in Sarawak, by researching their history, beliefs and cultural aesthetic through the innovations of the cultural artifacts. This research was done by using a qualitative approach as the main research method, in which, the research conducted by going to the longhouse area of the Iban community (observations included), conducts interviews with the informant, and run the documentation processes. This qualitative approach in research is one of the systemic methods to explains, observe and analyses the lifestyle, norms, social and individual practice as well as existing groups, values and beliefs. To understand information about the culture of a society, especially regarding the value, opinions, behavior and specific population context (Crabtree, 2011). The strength in qualitative research is able to provide a complex text description. Besides, this research carries out data collection methods using documentation process to assess the social community of Iban in their history and culture. According to Ferraris *et al.* (2014), there is nothing social outside the text, that documentation is one of the efforts or the human social actions that minimize the information storage process through paper, computer files, human thoughts

or the usage of technological tools such as camera or videos. The purpose is to observe the social community especially in social cultural context and as a way of developing and storing memories. In the collection of primary data, researcher used method of interviewing informant which was felt relevant in this research. In which, the informant has been interviewed based on their expertise in the material culture of the Iban community. The collection method that was used to obtain data is through the *Collective Memory* techniques that is to interview individual (in-depth interview) and group focus interviews method. According to Mead's (1929), *Collective Memory* is a collective memory that is essentially the past reorganized and adaptation of those image, beliefs, and experiences in the present moment. Besides, according to Olick (1999), *Collective Memory* is an action that incorporate collective representation factors (symbols, meanings, narratives, and rituals that exist in a society), cultural structures, and individual memories that is personal and formed by the social culture.

## Research Findings

The nomadic lifestyle of the Iban before having shaped the culture and heritage and became the identity in the Iban community today. The Iban culture was formed from nature and went through the process of assimilation, cross-cultural and cultural acculturation. According to Tugang (2011), there are two types of culture in the Iban community. The culture of objects involving artifacts and a culture of non-objects (intangible heritage). These two elements have a strong connection in creating a legacy of the Iban nation today. Generally, cultural artifacts have a broad scope because it includes physical material related to culture. These cultural artifacts have comprehensive method of function and have their own taboo. This tradition has been inherited from generation to generation by the Iban community and became a custom till nowadays. Nature has provided ideas and materials for the Iban community to innovate in developing cultural artifacts. Hence, there are several types of artifacts that have been synonym in Iban culture which has an affinity with nature. The culture inherited in the Iban community has existed for hundreds of years created by their ancestors. The culture was shared by many in order to form their identity as the Iban people. The Iban people believe that the culture they practice today is a gift from the God called *Petara*. Based on the Iban oral tradition, the Iban explains that once upon a time the Iban people and *Petara* communities lived together in a place called *Tembawai Tampun Juah*. The relationship between the Iban and *Petara* was temporary. The separation between mortal and divine happened as the result of conflict. Although the Iban have been taught the method of living through *Petara* (gift) way of life. Therefore, the legacy left by *Petara* and the information gained by the oral source earlier. These two components have become the essence and identity of the Iban community until now.

## ***Pua* (Iban Textile)**

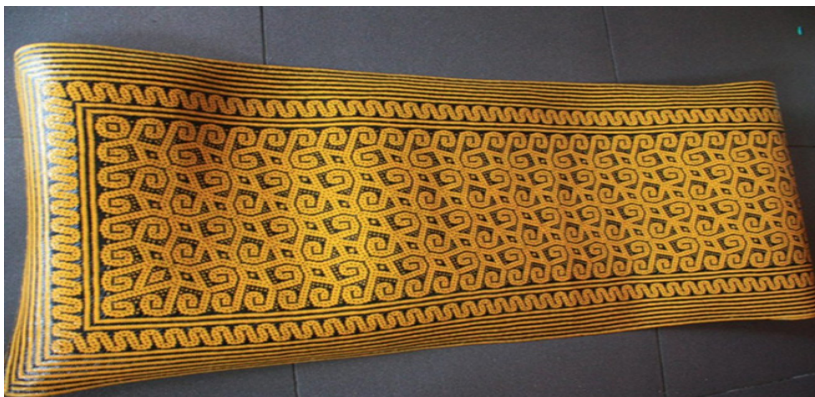
*Pua* was known as a sacred textile in Iban culture. The Iban produce their own textiles for social use in Iban culture, especially in ritual custom. *Pua* is considered as a culture symbol or identity of the Iban community. The Iban people believe that *Pua* has its own spiritual power and has a relationship with the supernatural powers. *Pua* weaving can only be woven by a woman whom received orders from *Petara* through a dream. Since the age of ten-year-old, daughters have been taught and exposed to the process of weaving cloth from their mother or grandmother. This learning process takes place in several stages and has a complicated process as well as many taboos in weaving Iban textiles. The *Pua* Iban are divided into four types based on fabric making techniques, specifically *Kumbu*, *Kebat*, *Sungkit* and *Karap*. The technique of making this fabric varies according to the production of patterns and motifs to be produced. The basic of making this fabric were produced through weaving techniques. Iban communities develop textile manufacturing in their culture by utilising surrounding nature. To produce a *Pua* material, they are using a various forest plants such as *Akar Tarum* (*Marsdenia tinctorial*) to produce a black and blue colour and *Engkerbai* (*Psychotria Viridiflora*) to produce red colour. While *taya* plants (*Gossypium sp*) are used as yarn for weaving *Pua*. The process of making *Pua* will often take months or years depending on the complexity of the pattern produced or the expertise of the weaver. Patterns found in the *Pua* woven were ensue inspired from nature and each pattern produced has a sacral function in Iban culture based on the of the pattern status. The Iban pattern design was split into two bisect which is a low pattern and high pattern. To produce low pattern such as flora patterns only done by young weavers while for fauna pattern which is high pattern in Iban culture will be done by senior weavers. In the past, *Pua* was used to greet the head of the enemy after the Iban men returned from the head-hunter expedition and used in Iban community death ceremonies.



**Image 1** *Pua* Iban  
Source: Sarawak Museum, 2019.

## Basket and Mat

In the past, webbing is an essential skill for Iban women. This skill is taught by mothers to their daughters as early as age 13. They will teach an easy webbing such as woven *Raga* (small pouches) and *Baka* (storage baskets). The creation of baskets in Iban culture was influenced by traditional economic activities such as planting rice. They plant rice once a year, then the rice will be harvested in January every year. The harvested rice will be separated from the stem. Then the rice seeds will be cleaned using *nyiru*. It aims to dispose the bran. Usually the Iban people will get a decent harvest so they can fulfil sixty *Lanji* (Paddy storage) or around 3,000 kilograms in one year. Typically, the material used by the Iban community in producing plaits is like rattan, danan, leisure, bemban and reed. Aside from that, the Iban also weaving mats as a cultural artefact. The material of mat or *Tikai* is made from nature, they use a natural plant such as *Bemban* (*Donox arundastrum*), rattan, and *Mengkuang* (screwpine leaves). There are several types of *Tikai* in Iban craft such as *Empeda*, *Belebak Tampai* and *Alus*. All of these were distinguished by the type of mat webbing technique. The traditional woven mats of the Iban people are one hundred percent using organic materials, which are plants that are easy to be found in Borneo's rainforests such as rattan, thatch, *bemban*, and reed. Proximately most of the Iban mats motifs were inspired rather than copying flora and fauna motifs found in the forest of Borneo. In the production of Iban mat weaving *Tikai Sebayan* is the most spiritual plait and should not be woven by ordinary women. *Sebayan* refers to afterlife, the Iban believed if they passed away, their soul would go the *Sebayan*. During the celebration of *Gawai Antu* (Ghost Celebration), the Iban women will weave this mat. That mat is woven specifically for the spirits of the deceased. The purpose of the festival is to remember and appease the spirits of ancestors died in the past and hope that they will always bless the lives of their grandchildren still living in the human world.



**Image 2** *Tikai Buah*  
Source: Sarawak Museum, 2019.

## Wood Carving

The Iban also produce wood-based cultural artifacts. Types of wood such as *Tebelian* are often used by the Iban community in producing house poles, coffin, stairs and wood carvings. Usually the Iban use a *Tebelian* wood (*Eusideroxylon zwageri*) to make a woodcarving. This wood is belonging to the collection of high-quality hardwoods with high market value. This type of wood grows abundantly and easy to find in the forests of Borneo. Even in the past, the ancient Chinese kingdom has imported the timber for their construction sector. Some types of Iban cultural artifacts that have been identified using wood are *Lupong Manang* (Shaman Box). The cultural artifacts of *Lupong Manang* is one of the artifacts made from *Tebelian* wood bark and curved to produce a cylindrical shape. The box was decorated with rattan ornaments as jewellery. By observing closely, the *Lupong Manang* Iban has several special features consists of dark brown coloured, carved on the lid and around the body. The artefact has a cylindrical shape and not too large. The purpose of the creation *Lupong Manang* was to serves as a place to store *Pengaroh* (amulets) and the tools used in the traditional medicine. The traditional treatment of Iban is *Pelian* or *Belian*, a ritual ceremony that believes all diseases suffered by the Iban community was caused by evil spirits.

Wood-carving tradition had a spiritual meaning in Iban culture. This factor is part of the culture of head-hunters. Before the Iban male embark on a head-hunter expedition. They must do a sacral ritual ceremony known as *Gawai Kenyalang*. Before the ceremony, a *kenyalang* statue will be specially carved by a skilled elderly group of the Iban. The statue was made using *Tebelian* wood and carved to resemble a bird as a symbol of the interpretation of the God of war recognised as *Sengalang Burung*. The statue will be carved with engravings of human figures as symbols of a mighty Iban hero based on the legends of *Panggau Libau*. The *Kenyalang* statue carvings will be stain using dominant colours in the Iban culture. The colours were *Kangan* (black), *Belacu* (white), *Gadong* (soft colours) and *Mansau* (bright colours). All these colours symbolize of human life based on nature. Referring to an Iban oral source from Saribas, the grandest ritual ceremony in the Iban culture is the *Gawai Kenyalang*. The ceremony was a special request by the *Petara* through a dream, the Iban believes that every *Petara* order must be carried out as an obligation to avoid disaster and catastrophe in the longhouse. In Iban cosmology, it is said that *Gawai Kenyalang* is a ritual ceremony made by the Gods in *Panggau Libau* to celebrate the *Sengalang Burung* (God of War). In the human world, *Sengalang Burung* is known as hornbills (*Rhinoceros Hornbill*) also known as the king of birds.

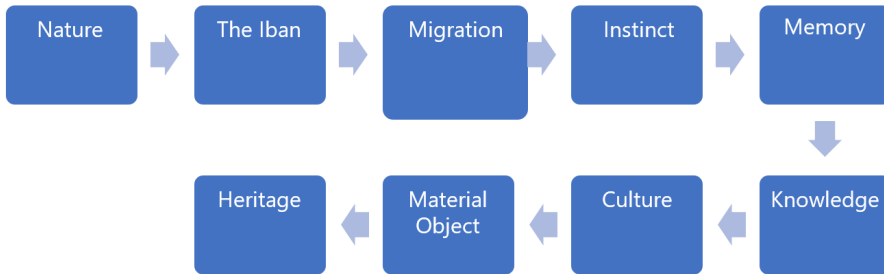




**Image 3** *Ukir Kenyalang*  
Source: Sarawak Museum, 2019.

## Research Discussion

Early artifacts that manifested in Iban culture such as webbing, textiles, and war equipment. These artifacts were the result of Iban people's innovation through the process of adaptation from experience, the natural surroundings and the necessity of life. In addition, the cultural artifacts of the Iban people were also influenced by the aesthetic values from other ethnicities in Sarawak through cross-cultural processes and cultural developments such as social communication networks and mixed marriage. In making the early cultural artifacts of the Iban, the material had been seen through several categories based on the manufacturing phase. In the early Iban creation was more dominant using the original and organic materials that was accessible in the area Iban community settlement. When the Iban people are increasingly adept at created and innovations, they had developed the making of cultural artifacts through a modify and combine of the materials, specifically organic material with non-organic materials such as iron, gold and copper. The early creation of Iban artifacts was easy and rather crude. The initial idea of the creation of Iban cultural artifacts was only to fulfil the personal needs of life. Then the creation evolved to become complicated and more complex when they first included elements of beauty in artifacts such as engraving, symbols and colours. For cultural artifacts that are used daily will usually be produced briefly and only to fulfil the needs of a simple function without the addition of excessive aesthetic motives and values. In conclusion, the creation of Iban cultural artifacts are driven by of spiritual belief, which is called *semangat* (spirit). They believe that every creation of cultural artifacts such as textiles and plaits have taboos and must be obeyed.



**Diagram 1.1** Nature impact in the Iban cultural artifacts

Source: Modified from Navis, 1984.

The relationship between nature and human is not a new perspective in human cultural studies. Nature creates life and thus life has the necessity to learn to live by depending on the tools of adaptation, communication and conflict. Natural elements were formed by earth, fire, air, and water. Geographic areas such as mountains, valleys, oceans, jungles and deserts have been inhabitant by ancient human since thousands of years ago. In addition, the migration of early primitive human throughout the world was encourage by the purpose of survival and discovering. Therefore, these purposes of migration have resulted of the creation of early culture and ancient human civilization. A philosophy pioneered by Navis (1984) emphasizes that nature is a teacher for human being (*Alam takambang jadi guru*). *Takambang* means the process of natural size increases and physical changes. The teacher (nature) believes that all sources of knowledge create life, including human. The intellect and emotion of the primitive human has led to the curiosity of discovering their surrounding environment for learning and improving their living standard. Therefore, nature has significant influence in producing vital knowledge of learning and living for human being. Human has gradually begun to understand nature through the process of several generations. This has resulted in developing various cultures and communities. Therefore, communities are identified by distinct characteristics of culture among ethnics.

85, 000 years ago, early humans have migrated from the continent of Africa and the Middle East. This migration process was caused by drastic shifting in weather climate resulted a long drought and thick ice conditions that make the region unsuitable for humans living (Petraglia, *et al.*, 2010). The migration process takes more than 10 000 years for human to arrive in areas such as the *Sunda* continent (Malay Archipelago) and its surroundings. Archaeological and fossil evidence meanwhile presented that modern humans were present in Southeast Asia and Australia by ca 45 ka ago (timeline of human prehistory) (O’Connell & Allen, 2004). The early migration of the Iban community can be identified based on oral traditions and historical sources. They believed that the Iban people migrated more than 600 years ago from Kapuas, Kalimantan. But

referring on Simonson et al. (2011), genetic research, early human migration across the Sundaland route connecting the land of Southeast Asia has occurred about 45,000 to 50,000 years ago. Evidence of genetic sampling suggests that the theory of Austronesian society originated in southern Taiwan is unlikely. Recent research based on DNA analysis has concluded that migration from mainland Southeast Asia only occurred in the same range. It is predicted that several lineages associated with the prehistoric migration of the last ice age have created a wave of migration through the ISEA coastline. The Iban community believed to be among those involved in the early migration. This fact is based on the discovery of primitive human fossils that have been excavated near the modern settlement of the Iban community longhouses in Niah Cave, which is in Miri, Sarawak. It is widely believed regarding the Iban existence in that period. As time move on, the Iban people had spread to the northern part of Borneo and identify a suitable settlement and established their ethnicity based on their surrounding nature. However, the migration progress does not halt. The mobilisation of the Iban was carried out for several generations to find suitable location to be inhabited. There are various factors that caused to the migration of the Iban community. Initially, it was for the purpose of searching fertile soil. After the culture of the Iban community is more developed, they migrate with the aim for the head-hunter expedition with the purpose of expanding power, custom and their legacy.

The Iban migration through the nature has led to human curiosity. The Iban curiosity is the driving force for the desire to understanding the conditions of nature, to seek reasons and causation in the understanding of nature. Therefore, human instincts and curiosity have helped and encouraged them to evolved into a more advanced and sophisticated species. The implications of the longing to understand regarding to natural events has resulted in extraordinary experiences for human being to critically think beyond their current habitat. However, in order to mobilise the human mind and instincts to function properly, a precise stimulus must be enacting in order for the human mind to acts properly in responding to stimuli. The impression of the stimulus human brain will lead human curiosity to further understanding of their surrounding nature. Through this process, the Iban has developed a higher ability to think as to find solution for their problem by referring to observation, learning, failure and constant adjustment. Therefore, the development of the Iban minds was self-produce through the process of adaptation, communication and conflict rather than act of nature alone by experience.

Experience is referring to events or incidents that have been passed on by humans. Early human experiences can be categorised into two, which are daily experiences and extreme experiences. Daily experience is referring to

repeated activities carried out by humans such as searching for food, hunting and planting. However, extreme human experience referred an event has passed through certain times and leaves a deep impression in their memories. Impact from that experience cause a pleasing or traumatic result in human life. Therefore, the experience can leave a good or bad impression and thus imprinted in human memory. A good experience will lead human to repeat the same action. However, a bad experience will result in trauma and fear for the human emotions. Such example is war, death and natural disaster. Human constantly will try to avoid or overcome those situations by providing good solution. Human constantly gained experiences throughout his life thus able to avoid and finds solution to certain challenges. All the experience has left a significant impact to the Iban culture. They gradually learning based on the process of adaptation, communication and conflict. The adaptation from experience requires a long period of time for the Iban to understand every action and event that applies in their environment. This understanding will provide knowledge for humans as to balance, reduce, overcome and improve social actions in their livelihood. In this case, the Iban experience through the process of adaptation, communication, and conflict have built a comprehensive knowledge for human to create the early civilization. Such experience has made the Iban to innovate and develop a knowledge on the foundation of nature. As a result of those innovations, human become more expert and able to produce a local understanding of their surrounding environment. The local knowledge has developed among human beings as a practical knowledge and practiced continuously in life. Human knowledge is vast and has variety of branches. Therefore, there are two views in classifying the Iban knowledge.

The early knowledge in Iban culture is to understand the solution of surviving from hunger and danger on the surface. Later, when the Iban became literate and have deep understanding of nature eco-system, the knowledge has developed into broader elements in sustaining life such as planting crops and domesticate wild animals. Besides that, the Iban also able to create a simple and efficient crafting method from bone and stone to produce a hunting equipment, jewellery and heirloom. Through a brief understanding of nature, the Iban have rapidly progress in developing their early culture. The development of knowledge in the Iban mind becomes more complex and thus have a high tendency to broadly explore nature. The changes in climate, has assisted human to develop the science of climatology as to predict the weather based on the monsoon season, drought and wind shifting. The Iban has become the master of co-existing with nature through the benefit of their observation ability. Furthermore, the Iban has developed advanced skill to sustain their live by utilise natural resources. Such knowledge was repeated and modified to suit with need of human living.

The development of the Iban knowledge has become more complicated with the acknowledgement of divine authority over human. Such force is undeniably beyond human control and thus become the foundation of the belief system of human being. Indirectly, the development of such knowledge has resulted to a more sophisticated understanding of nature. The interpretation of early Iban has concluded that nature was seen from two different perspectives which is the human world and 'other' world, by 'other' is referring to the world of heaven, heaven and the afterlife. Throughout generations, the 'other' worlds have always been described by human beings as the beginning and the end (Alpha and Omega). This belief has become the pillar of faith for all religions around the world. The idea and believing in the existence of a divine authority has been manifested as a great and charismatic figure. The image of that power has been represent based on dominant forms of nature such as fauna and flora. This idea is the basis of the existence of the beliefs of animism. The animism has manifested in revealing the high human intellect in depicting the images of divine and deities which have absolute power over nature. The power and strength of Gods as absolute rulers has been translated as a belief in Iban life. The Godly figure believed to be able to help, listen to human demands and hopes. Therefore, God and spirit has been given the highest respect in the Iban socio-cultural with often offering the sacrifices, food and worship.

In order to offer respect, believe and be loyal for the faith, the Iban able to develop an advance and complicated culture based on their spiritual belief. Thus, early Iban adapts and religiously practice their belief. The existences of faith in Iban culture has made them to split into small groups and formed communities based on shared idea and belief. However, the line of communication between groups were still open. The separation of the Iban into smaller groups were based on the human's choices on trusting nature. In general, human culture is associate with the certain belief and the habits of a society. The development of the Iban culture has occurred in stages and appear to be fluid. The transformation of the Iban culture was depending on the current preferences and the need of the community. The development of culture in Iban life function as a mechanism to solve problem, indicate human intellectual achievements, a manifestations and philosophies in determining the social, economic and political aspects around human beings. In the end, the Iban collective work has created complex living space and in the same time created an early comprehensive culture. The Iban culture can be categorised into two elements, first is the basic culture that refers to the needs of human life. The latter is the advance culture that fills the Iban spiritual and externally. Intangible heritage was the product of early Iban culture through their experiences with the environment. Therefore, intangible culture consists of literature, music, dance, art, food, customs and taboos. These intangible products were influenced by

the aspect of spiritual and philosophical in the Iban life. Nonetheless, intangible culture would not be complete without the existence of tangible culture, which function by presenting the Iban intellectual manifestation in the culture. These two cultural elements are significant in the survival and development for the Iban life to continue to be dynamic and progressive. This achievement leads to the creation of a sophisticated the Iban culture, such are the fundamentals required for human being to live in civilised and systematic manners.

All the knowledge and innovation of the creation of cultural artifacts was the result of humans' adaptation to nature and transformed into practices for the coming generation. The tradition was nurture and development further until the practice expand into identity and heritage. The inherit tradition experienced changes through collective culture and transferred by learning and practices done by family, community and diplomatic relation. Cultural heritage has been passed on by the older generation to their children from an early age through various means such as mentoring, involvement, teaching through stories and practices. Children will be educating through their parents own knowledge and practices gained from the pass generation. The method of transferring those knowledges was done by oral stories, customs, beliefs, taboos, local custom and the creation of cultural artifacts. Therefore, this process happened continuously and will live in the culture of a society. Furthermore, the identification of human being can be done through cultures such as language, traditional dress, customs, local wisdom, art, traditional food and way of life.

## **Conclusion**

Generally, human knowledge in creating something that includes artifacts is influenced by nature and in the timeline during the period that they adapt, communicate and create conflicts between each other. It is believed that human intellectual is influenced by human nature that lives in groups with the environment such as mountain range, estuaries, seas, hills, islands, and jungles. Indirectly, such settlements have produced an early human culture and transformed into a long process, that is from one site to another site, from one failure to another failure, before humans found an effort to resolve such conflicts with nature and fellow human beings. The process of this cultural changes exists in a neutral way based on the space of human living environment and require a long time for human to adapt. Cultural artifacts developed in human civilization occurred consistently. The development of knowledge took place from year to year, century to century based on time. In line with the development of civilization, human beings have indirectly developed cultural artifacts as a symbol of social achievement among human beings. Progress in human culture has created innovation in producing cultural artifacts becoming

more sophisticated. Humans become creative in the use of material on the basis of nature but more than plants. Human also create motifs that are felt to be significant in their cultural lives in developing cultural artifact. In realising a great aesthetic value in the innovation of cultural artifacts, humans have linked the function and usefulness of these cultural artifacts based on their beliefs, life trends, and philosophies about nature and their communities. However, cultural artifacts can experience changes in human culture. The lifespan of an artefact is entirely depending on human choice to continue using and practice it in the future. Through this circumstance, human beings are the main conservers of ensuring the survival of cultural artifacts and continue preserving it until the end of the time. If an alternate situation occurs and the development of human culture come to a stagnant. Human have no choice but to restart the cultural creation process from the beginning.

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