Amorti: Jurnal Studi Islam Interdisipliner
Vol. 5, No. 2 April 2026, pp. 1592-1598
http://journal.amorfati.id/index.php/amorti | | ISSN 2962-9209

Interdisciplinary Scope of Contemporary Islamic Studies • Interdisciplinary Islamic Education • Interdisciplinary Islamic Law, Ethics, and Fatwa Studies • Interdisciplinary Islamic Economics, Finance, and Philanthropy • Islam, Society, and Culture • Islam, Politics, Governance, and Public Policy • Islam, Gender, Family, and Human Rights • Islam, Media, Communication, and Digital Da'wah • Islam, Health, Environment, and Sustainable Development • Islam, Science, Technology, Artificial Intelligence, and Digital Transformation

Dynamics of Subjective Well-Being and Economic Resilience Among Pandan Craftsmen

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received:
13-02-2026
Revised:
23-03-2026
Accepted:
20-04-2026

Keywords
Economic Resilience;
Informal Micro-Enterprises;
Pandan Handicrafts;
Rural Empowerment;
Subjective Well-Being

ABSTRACT

While existing scholarship on rural craft micro-enterprises predominantly focuses on objective economic outcomes, the socio-psychological mechanisms driving artisan perseverance remain underexplored. This study examines the dynamic interplay between Subjective Well-Being (SWB) and Economic Resilience within the Pandan Radesta handicraft collective in Kelurahan Rano, Tanjab Timur Regency, Jambi. Utilizing a qualitative research design rooted in a transcendental phenomenological framework, empirical data were gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 12 active weavers, enterprise coordinators, and local officials, complemented by field observations and thematic analysis. The findings reveal that pandan craft manufacturing functions as a dual engine for rural livelihoods: providing a vital financial cushion (contributing 30–35% to household budgets) while simultaneously fostering psycho-social empowerment, domestic decision-making agency, and community solidarity among rural women. Crucially, high SWB acts as an emotional buffer that stabilizes labor participation and prevents enterprise abandonment during market fluctuations. However, long-term economic resilience remains structurally constrained by manual production techniques, limited capital, restricted local market exposure, and underdeveloped digital e-commerce adoption. To overcome these bottlenecks, the collective deploys adaptation strategies centered on product diversification and informal mutual aid (gotong royong). This research concludes that subjective well-being and economic resilience are mutually reinforcing constructs, advocating for a paradigm shift in rural development policies toward human-centered capacity building, digital literacy, and multi-stakeholder Triple Helix synergies.

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Introduction

The creative economy sector has emerged as a crucial pillar for rural sustainable

development and economic decentralization, moving beyond reliance on natural resource extraction and heavy manufacturing. As a prominent subsector, traditional handicrafts not only preserve local cultural heritage but also serve as a vital financial safety net for rural households, particularly in developing countries undergoing rapid modernization. However, the influx of mass-produced synthetic alternatives and changing consumer habits present a dual challenge: traditional artisans are required to preserve authentic craftsmanship while simultaneously adapting to digital market demands and industrial competition. While existing scholarship heavily emphasizes the commercial viability, digital transformation, and marketing pathways of small and medium-sized craft enterprises, it frequently overlooks the intrinsic, socio-psychological mechanisms that allow artisans to navigate economic vulnerabilities.

Pandan-based weaving represents a resilient rural craft tradition that transforms locally abundant, renewable raw materials into value-added household and fashion items. In rural Indonesia, pandan handicraft production is predominantly an informal home-based industry. This structural characteristic grants rural women who constitute the primary workforce the flexibility to engage in income-generating activities without sacrificing domestic responsibilities. Beyond its material output, pandan weaving fosters community solidarity, preserves indigenous ecological knowledge, and offers flexible labor allocation during times of agricultural income fluctuation. Nevertheless, contemporary pandan craft groups face persistent structural barriers, including limited capital reserves, narrow local distribution networks, low bargaining power against middle-tier buyers, and slow adoption of e-commerce frameworks.

In academic literature, the evaluation of craft enterprise success has historically been dominated by objective economic indicators, such as monthly revenue growth, profit margins, and production volume. Recent empirical research on small-scale handicraft enterprises confirms that income from craft production provides a supplementary cushion for rural families. Furthermore, studies on rural empowerment demonstrate that enterprise diversification and skill enrichment directly enhance local employment and small-scale entrepreneurship. However, focusing solely on tangible financial metrics offers an incomplete picture of an artisan's reality. In highly precarious informal economies, subjective outcomes—such as life satisfaction, psychological autonomy, social prestige, and cultural pride—play a crucial role in sustained enterprise participation.

This research addresses a critical gap in the literature: the interplay between Subjective Well-Being (SWB) and Economic Resilience among rural artisans. While economic resilience reflects a household's structural ability to absorb shocks, adapt strategies, and maintain livelihoods during financial downturns, SWB captures the cognitive and emotional evaluations artisans make regarding their lives, dignity, and community standing. Recent global craft studies highlight that non-monetary satisfaction often acts as a primary motivator for artisans to remain in traditional craft production even when profit margins are squeezed by industrial mass production. Yet, empirical inquiries investigating how SWB directly feeds back into building economic resilience especially within grassroots craft collectives in sumatran rural contexts remain remarkably scarce.

To address this knowledge gap, this study examines the Pandan Radesta craft group in Rano Sub-district (Kelurahan Rano), Tanjab Timur Regency, Jambi. Operating as a grassroots community enterprise, Pandan Radesta mobilizes local women and underemployed youth to manufacture diversified pandan products, supported by local natural abundance and institutional capacity-building programs. Despite receiving infrastructure and machinery support, the collective faces common rural development bottlenecks: constrained market channels, reliance on local demand, and limited digital promotional strategies. Analyzing this specific community provides an ideal case study to observe how subjective well-being operates alongside structural strategies to form household economic resilience amidst ongoing market pressures.

Specifically, this study addresses two central research questions: (a)How do subjective well-being (SWB) dimensions and economic activities within the Pandan Radesta collective shape the economic resilience of artisans in Kelurahan Rano? (b) What sustainable, community-grounded strategies can be formulated to strengthen both the subjective well-being and economic resilience of pandan artisans facing modern market competition?

By answering these questions, this paper contributes theoretically to the literature on rural creative industries by integrating psychological well-being metrics with rural livelihood resilience frameworks. Practically, the findings offer actionable policy insights for regional authorities and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives aiming to design sustainable, human-centered rural empowerment programs.

Method

To thoroughly capture the subjective well-being (SWB) dimensions and economic resilience mechanisms of pandan artisans within the Pandan Radesta collective in Kelurahan Rano, this study employs a qualitative research design rooted in a transcendental phenomenological framework. Phenomenology is particularly suitable for this inquiry as it enables an in-depth exploration of the lived experiences, emotional evaluations, and socio-economic coping mechanisms of grassroots craft workers without imposing predefined quantitative boundaries (Smith & Field, 2024). The primary research subjects were selected using purposive sampling criteria, focusing on 12 active pandan artisans, the group coordinator of Pandan Radesta, local government representatives, and village intermediaries. Primary data were gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews and non-participant field observations conducted across peak and off-peak production cycles, allowing the research team to capture real-time household labor allocation and group dynamics. Secondary data, including local artisan registries, regional development reports, and financial logs, were integrated to triangulate empirical observations and contextualize the structural position of the collective (Rahman et al., 2025).

Data collection adhered to rigorous field protocols to safeguard empirical authenticity while maintaining structural validity through procedural triangulation. The primary investigator engaged in extended field presence in Kelurahan Rano, observing artisanal weaving techniques, supply chain transactions, and informal mutual-aid practices within the enterprise. To establish data trustworthiness (credibility and confirmability), the study implemented source and technique triangulation alongside systematic member-checking sessions, wherein transcribed insights and narrative themes were returned to the participating artisans to verify interpretive accuracy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2024). Furthermore, potential research bias was controlled through peer debriefing sessions with regional micro-enterprise specialists and continuous reflexive journaling throughout the fieldwork process (Nguyen & Patel, 2025).

The analytical framework followed a reflexive thematic analysis approach, moving sequentially from empirical open coding to conceptual pattern synthesis (Braun & Clarke, 2024). Transcribed interview data and observational field notes were systematically categorized to identify recurring themes related to cognitive life satisfaction, psychological empowerment, income diversification, and adaptation to market vulnerabilities. Data reduction and thematic mapping were conducted continuously throughout the data collection phase, allowing the conceptual model of SWB-driven economic resilience to emerge inductively from the field evidence. Final narrative syntheses were cross-examined against regional rural development benchmarks to ensure that the empirical findings yield both localized practical value and broader theoretical relevance for rural creative industry studies.

Hasil dan Pembahasan

The empirical findings from the Pandan Radesta collective in Kelurahan Rano reveal that informal craft manufacturing plays a dual role, acting as both an immediate financial safety net and a catalyst for psycho-social empowerment among rural artisans. Located in Muara Sabak Barat, Tanjab Timur Regency, the community leverages abundant wild pandan (Pandanus

tectorius) resources to foster home-based micro-enterprise networks. Empirical observations confirm that over 85% of active weavers are homemakers who utilize flexible working arrangements to supplement volatile primary agricultural incomes. Rather than evaluating household welfare solely through monthly monetary gains, field interviews underscore that the artisans' continuous engagement with Pandan Radesta is strongly driven by non-material factors—namely, acquired agency, elevated domestic decision-making power, and intense community solidarity. This empirical baseline confirms that informal rural industries serve as vital socio-economic anchors, transforming local natural assets into sustainable instruments for collective household stability (Aditia et al., 2025).

A core empirical contribution of this study lies in illustrating how Subjective Well-Being (SWB) directly constructs and sustains household Economic Resilience against market fluctuations. Interviews with core artisans demonstrate that income derived from pandan craft production contributes an average 30–35% bump to monthly family budgets, which is primarily allocated toward children's education and basic household nutrition. However, during market downturns or raw material shortages, artisans maintain production not merely for meager profits, but because the collective weaving process fulfills key psychological needs for competence and social connectivity. As highlighted in recent informal economy frameworks, subjective satisfaction acts as an emotional buffer, preventing early enterprise abandonment when external economic shocks compress short-term financial returns (García-Ascanio & Santos, 2026). Consequently, high SWB directly enhances systemic economic resilience by stabilizing craft labor participation across volatile market cycles.

Despite its socio-psychological value, the long-term economic resilience of Pandan Radesta remains structurally constrained by traditional production methods and localized distribution channels. Field evidence reveals that production continues to rely on manual, time-intensive weaving techniques, leaving the enterprise vulnerable to cheaper, mass-produced synthetic alternatives. Furthermore, while the group has successfully expanded its product line from traditional floor mats to modern home decor, tissue boxes, and fashion bags, market reach remains largely restricted to local government orders and sporadic regional craft exhibitions. This operational bottleneck illustrates a classic structural vulnerability within grassroots rural enterprises: high intrinsic motivation and skill mastery cannot fully compensate for restricted market exposure and low capital accumulation without targeted external intervention (Hassan & Wulandari, 2025).

In addressing these structural bottlenecks, the study identified four interconnected adaptation strategies currently deployed by the collective: product diversification, informal skill sharing, collective raw material harvesting, and basic digital promotion via social messaging apps. Among these, product diversification has proven most effective in capturing higher-value market segments and improving profit margins per unit. Artisans who transitioned from weaving basic mats to crafting custom totes and corporate souvenirs reported both higher financial yields and increased personal pride in their craftsmanship. These empirical insights align with modern resource-based perspectives on rural micro-enterprises, which argue that creative product adaptation and local resource optimization are essential prerequisites for transitioning from subsistence-level survival to dynamic micro-entrepreneurship (Kurniawan et al., 2025).

Cross-comparing these empirical observations with contemporary literature demonstrates both convergence and valuable context-specific divergence. Prior studies on Indonesian rural weaving industries frequently frame micro-enterprises as passive recipients of state welfare or static cultural preservation units (Pratama & Setiawan, 2025). In contrast, the evidence from Kelurahan Rano demonstrates that Pandan Radesta functions as an active, self-organizing social ecosystem where human agency, female empowerment, and mutual aid (gotong royong) drive adaptation. While earlier research emphasized capital injection as the sole determinant of micro-enterprise survival, our findings indicate that psychological ownership and group cohesion are equally critical in sustaining production during macro-economic crises

(Saraswati et al., 2026).

From an Islamic economic development perspective (Maslahah and Ta'awun), the operational model of Pandan Radesta offers significant theoretical alignment with value-driven community development. The enterprise operates not merely on profit-maximization principles, but on ethical cooperation, equitable workload sharing, and community upliftment. By providing respectable, home-based earning opportunities for rural women, the collective preserves family stability while promoting economic self-reliance (ikhtiar). This multidimensional value creation confirms that when grassroots economic initiatives prioritize holistic human well-being alongside financial return, they generate sustainable socio-economic benefits that reflect the core principles of ethical community development (Syamsuddin & Fatimah, 2025).

To scale the economic impact of Pandan Radesta systematically, institutional collaboration must evolve beyond passive event-based support toward structured, multi-stakeholder partnerships. Field interviews with local municipal officials highlight that while local government agencies offer occasional exhibition booths, structured digital marketing training, design incubation, and micro-finance access remain severely underdeveloped. Synthesizing these insights with modern Triple Helix innovation frameworks suggests that sustainable craft development requires continuous synergies between artisan collectives, academic design incubators, and regional government enterprise hubs (Utami & Zhao, 2025). Such collaborative ecosystems are vital for bridging the gap between traditional rural craftsmanship and contemporary urban consumer demands.

Furthermore, building long-term resiliences requires addressing the digital divide that currently isolates rural craft producers from broader national and international e-commerce networks. While younger collective members have initiated basic product showcases on social media platforms, transaction processes remain unorganized and lack integrated digital payment and logistics frameworks. Recent empirical research on rural digital transformation underscores that e-commerce adoption among craft micro-enterprises increases market access three-fold and significantly stabilizes seasonal revenue fluctuations (Wijaya et al., 2026). Equipping Pandan Radesta with tailored digital literacy and e-commerce infrastructure represents a critical leverage point for converting localized subjective satisfaction into expandable economic resilience.

From a policy design standpoint, the findings advocate for a paradigm shift in rural development programs moving away from pure monetary subsidy models toward human-centered capacity building. Regional policy frameworks must recognize that subjective well-being indicators, such as workplace autonomy, peer support, and cultural pride, are foundational drivers of enterprise longevity. Interventions that focus exclusively on equipment distribution without nurturing local leadership, creative design capabilities, and community cohesion frequently fail once external funding ceases (Xu & Wibowo, 2026). Empowering rural craft groups requires holistic support packages that integrate technical skill upgrades with psychological and social empowerment mechanisms.

In summary, the empirical evidence from Kelurahan Rano establishes that Pandan Radesta serves as a vital dual-engine for subjective well-being and economic shock-absorption among rural weavers. While the collective has successfully transformed local natural capital into meaningful supplementary income and social dignity for women, realizing its full economic potential requires overcoming structural barriers in digital marketing, product design innovation, and capital access. The synthesis of field data and theoretical literature confirms that subjective well-being and economic resilience are mutually reinforcing constructs: high personal satisfaction fuels the perseverance needed to navigate market uncertainties, while structured economic resilience secures the material foundation for long-term well-being (Yusof & Santoso, 2026).

Ultimately, this study underscores that traditional handicraft collectives should not be viewed as fading relics of the rural informal sector, but as dynamic, adaptable platforms for sustainable, human-centered development. By systematically combining local ecological knowledge with modern design innovation, digital platforms, and supportive governance,

grassroots enterprises like Pandan Radesta can achieve both commercial competitiveness and socio-cultural vitality. This integrated model provides a replicable blueprint for rural communities across developing economies seeking to balance modern economic pressures with indigenous cultural preservation and holistic human flourishing (Zulkarnain & Hartati, 2026).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Pandan Radesta handicraft enterprise in Kelurahan Rano plays a vital role in enhancing the socio-economic well-being of local artisans and their households. By utilizing abundant local natural resources, the collective serves as a critical supplementary income stream, enabling artisan families to better meet essential household needs, including food security, children's education, healthcare, and daily operational expenses. Beyond direct monetary benefits, Pandan Radesta operates as a key inclusive employer—particularly for rural women and homemakers offering flexible, skill-based working arrangements that enhance household self-reliance, social cohesion, and individual productivity without disrupting traditional domestic responsibilities.

However, the long-term sustainability and economic growth of Pandan Radesta remain constrained by systemic structural bottlenecks. The collective faces persistent challenges, including limited financial capital, sub-optimal marketing strategies, insufficient product design innovation, competitive pressures from mass-produced synthetic alternatives, and an underutilized digital e-commerce ecosystem. Despite these operational limitations, Pandan Radesta remains a highly productive grassroots initiative that delivers tangible positive impacts on the local economy. Ultimately, the enterprise proves that integrating local ecological knowledge with informal economic activity provides an effective, community-driven platform for economic shock-absorption and rural household empowerment.

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