

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Backgrounds and Setting

This research is to investigate culture design through the soft furnishing products exclusively designed for Banyan Tree Hotel Resorts and Spas. As of the globalization era, the progression of design and manufacture are extensively advanced all over the world, thus many of products are mass-produced which generally do not have any distinct identity.

In contrast, in the past when our technology was not advanced as much as in nowadays, products at that time were massively different. Although some products were created to serve the same purpose, they were made by different means, materials, styles, etc. Therefore, they could reflect the whole concept and value of the making society or way of life. Admittedly, in the past we make products different by our simple idea originated from our ancestors whose culture has different mean from the other.

Every product that is made in each culture is unique and fulfills the human's need, not only for physical but also for psychological needs which are the most valuable criteria. As a result, in the one hand designers can apply the idea and concept of each culture to distinguish their work. On the other hand, they can produce uniqueness and value to that product.

One of the most successful models about culture-driven design is the Banyan Tree hotel, which is the case study of this research. In this model, traveler's destination

originates from mixed and harmonized cultures which come together with environment; tourists can get into local life by the hotel rooms and local way of life which also suit the modern life.

The most important and interesting point is that Banyan Tree can apply the local culture into design to create innovative design. Their design is well related or connected to the culture. Moreover, by the advanced technology and cutting edge of knowledge, Banyan Tree design team improves the defects of structure and architectural material to be more efficient so that these creations are valuable for the design scheme nowadays.

Although there are many Banyan Tree hotel chains around the world, each of them is still distinctly filled with Banyan Tree identities which are well known by travelers all over the world. Through, the outstanding and aesthetic destination, tourists can access to Banyan Tree brand experience which is totally different from others. Consequently, cultural concept design can be re-inferred and recreated to make the products more valuable, unique and useful to both their society and other people.

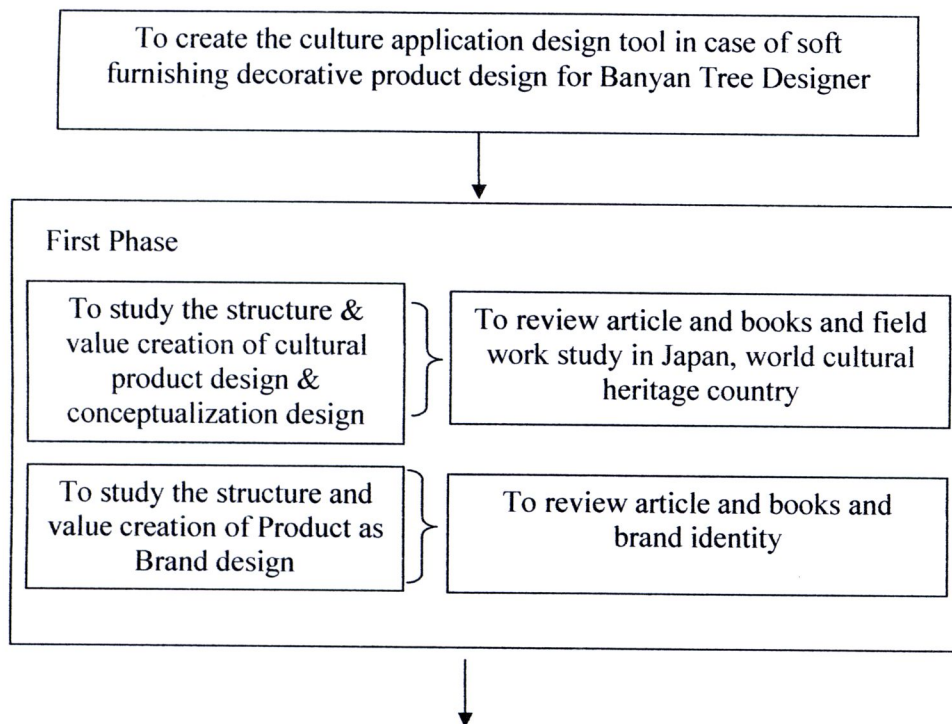
As a result, this is the study of product design by applying the local cultural concept of design to fit into the modern life style. Then, the study is to produce the Design Application Tool for product designers and interior designers, as a tool to support or as a guideline to help design the soft furnishing products. Hopefully, this study might be useful for product designers and other related creative designers to make the further and unique cultural products design.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of this research are as the following:

1. To create a cultural application design tool for designing soft decorative furnishing product: case of Banyan Tree Hotel and Resorts.
2. To demonstrate on how to apply the design tool to design Banyan Tree's soft furnishing products.

1.3 Research Structure



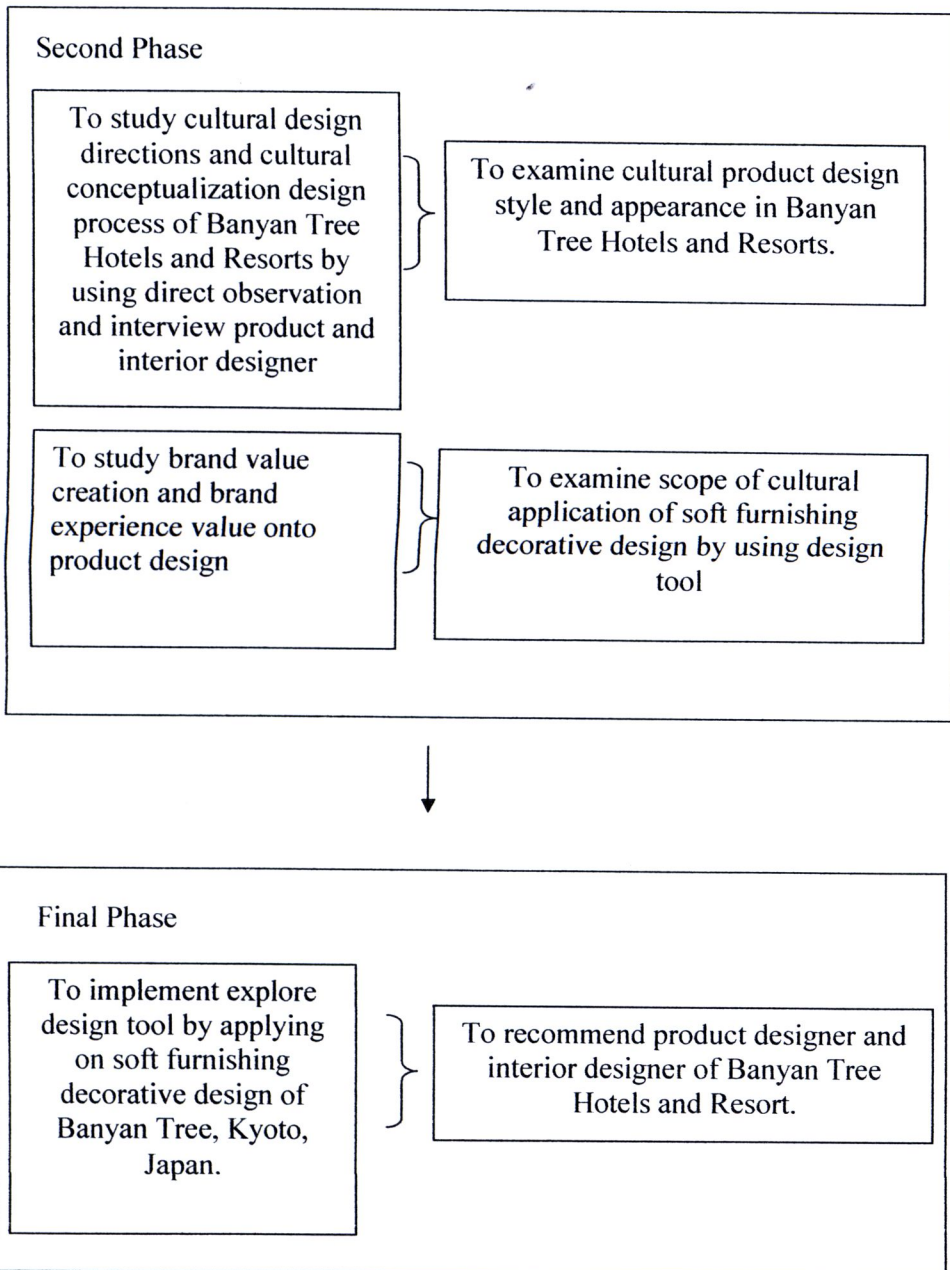


Figure 1.1: Diagram presents the research structure

Figure 1.1 demonstrates three phases in conducting this research. The first phase is to examine the value creation of culture and brand on product design including abstract and concrete value. The second phase is to investigate the value creation on Banyan Tree's products by using direct and indirect observation and interviews with product

designers and interior designers. The using of cultural product design application tool is demonstrated by applying them with a case, Banyan Tree Kyoto, Japan.

1.4 Scope and Limitation of the Study

As of the study of cultural concept application to create products for commercial context, these products should be composed of cultural and brand value at the same time; in this case soft furnishing for decoration product design of Banyan Tree is considered as the project case.

Cultural Value: Product created to express the folk value and local cultural concept is applied.

Brand Value: Product designed to support brand identity which consumers can experience.

Limitation of this research

1. The limitation of information accessibility; Banyan Tree is one of the leading hotel brands in the world. Any design information is not permitted by its policy so to gather the design and brand information are difficult and confidential; collecting pictures or images must be permitted by only the authority. Consequently, any particular fact or detail comes from the interview of the official designers.

2. The limitation of visual information accessibility; Regarded as the worldwide hotel chain, it is difficult to gain any information from the real location.

1.5 Frame of Work

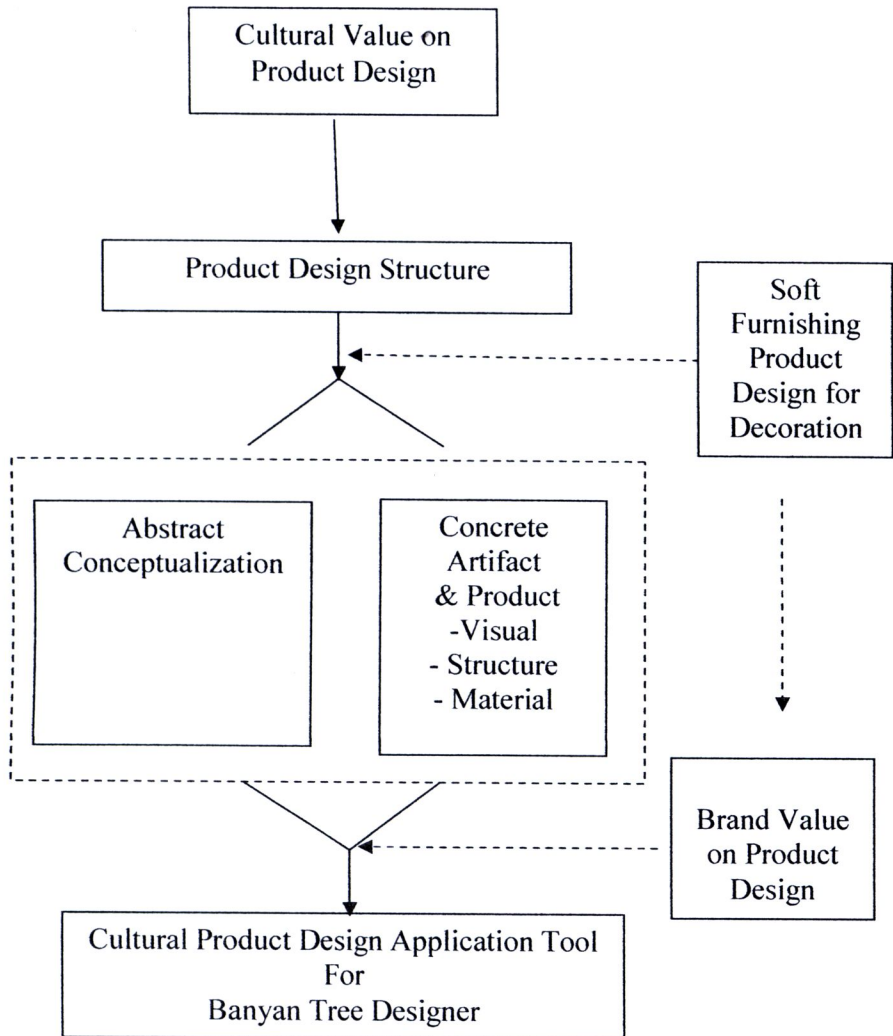


Figure 1.2: Diagram presents the research framework

As shown in Figure 1.2, the diagram illustrates the research framework. The scope is to explore the creation of cultural and brand value of product. The study focuses on both abstract and concrete value of product design in the scope of soft furnishing products for room decoration in Banyan Tree Hotels and Resorts. Kyoto is assumed as the selected location for the hotel in the future.