

## The Commodification of Kwangen as Product Innovation of Florist in Denpasar City

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### Abstract

*The existence of the kwangen bouquet on Tiktok has been responded positively by the Balinese people. Objects that are usually used as a means of their prayers have now changed form and meaning in the hands of florists in Denpasar. Kwangen has commodified as a innovation strategy product for florists who create. This certainly attracts the attention of many because this innovation was born from inspiration that contains spiritual meaning and closely related to the lives of Hinduism in Denpasar. This research uses a qualitative approach using observation methods, in-depth interviews, and literature studies on literature sources containing kwangen and social media of florists who made kwangen bouquets. Data was collected to see how florists use kwangen bouquets as a strategy for their business innovation by knowing the prevailing social actions. In addition, this study also traces the commodification process that occurs in kwangen bouquets by looking at changes in the meaning, value, and function of kwangen and finding out the responses of various participant to this innovation. The results of the research showed that all florists used three of the four existing social actions. One of the actions applies to all florists without exception, while the other two only a few of them are correlated to the social action. The changes in meaning, value, and function between kwangen and kwangen bouquet are visible in the differences found between the two.*

**Keywords:** commodification, kwangen bouquet, innovation.

### Introduction

Flowers have been used by humans since ancient Egyptian civilization as fragrance or perfume and in religious rituals (Adi, 2023). In Indonesia, flower decorations have been used since the Hindu kingdom era, where flowers were ornaments for palaces (Bungapapan in Nevisyi,dkk., t.t). Flowers are part of human life and inseparable from their journey, making flower arranging an art that never fades (Saputra & Setiawan, 2014). This reality supports the promising nature of the flower business. Florists—those who work in flower arrangement—must continuously innovate to maintain their business. Alluna Florist developed a product innovation that reflects Balinese culture. They introduced a bouquet concept not found in other florists: the kwangen bouquet. Kwangen is a traditional offering in Balinese Hindu prayer, carrying symbolic meaning (Giri, 2018). Through TikTok, Alluna Florist

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shared the beauty of kwangen bouquets, which captivated both the Balinese public and florists alike. This article examines the commodification of kwangen bouquets and explores why florists in Denpasar chose them as a business innovation.

### **Literature Review**

A relevant reference to this research is an article that contains analysis of commodification, such as “The Commodification of Female Body in Instagram (Discourse Analysis of Woman Endorsers in Jember)” by Alhadi, R. A & Hidayat, N (2017). The research looked at the commodification that happened to part of female body used to gain the exchange rate. The research used the logic of commodification of Karl Max, same as the theory of this research. There are four category as a motivation of the female endorser, which a popularity desire, endorser’s job preference, an economic factor, and obsession of endorser. Next, the author just found the commodification by symbolic violence of Pierre Bourdieu. Meanwhile, this research used the social actions teory by Max Weber to analysis the motivation of florist uses kwangen bouquet as an innovation product.

### **Research Methodology**

This article employs a qualitative approach using ethnographic thematic analysis to describe the cultural characteristics influencing individual social behavior (Hanurawan, 2006). Data was collected through observation, interviews, and literature review (Moleong, 2019). The research took place in Denpasar, a city known for innovation, including the kwangen bouquet trend. Data was analyzed through data reduction, presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. Validation need so that the interpretation in line with the informan’s perspectives (Bungin, 2017).

### **Results and Discussions**

#### **The Existence of Florists in Denpasar City**

A florist is someone engaged in the flower industry, including flower care and handling, floral design or arrangements, exhibitions/workshops, as well as ordering and delivery. The florist business entered Denpasar City through florists from outside Bali expanding into the Island of the Gods. Alongside technological advancements, social media has become a platform for florists in Denpasar to market their products. Florist businesses now showcase a variety of floral arrangements on platforms like Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram. As a result, many entrepreneurs have started their florist ventures without a physical storefront, often operating from home. Several florist hubs in Denpasar include Jalan Hayam Wuruk and Hang Tuah in East Denpasar, Wangaya Flower Market near the Gadjah Mada heritage area, and florist shops on Jalan Sutoyo in West Denpasar.

#### **Kwangen Bouquet Innovation**

Fontana (2009) defines innovation as the social and economic success derived from new efforts or the combination of previous strategies. The kwangen bouquet emerged as a product innovation by Alluna Florist in Denpasar, incorporating local cultural wisdom. This innovation transformed the traditional kwangen into a larger bouquet, with its value reflected in both size and price. The kwangen bouquet became a viral trend among Denpasar florists in mid-2024. Unlike traditional kwangen, which holds sacred meaning for Hindu religious practices, the bouquet serves a secular

purpose. Similarities include the kojong shape, use of banana leaves, identical flower types, and sampian as an aesthetic component. Differences lie in size and function: kwangen is small (about 5 cm) and used for prayer, while the bouquet is larger (50-100 cm) and intended as a form of appreciation.

### **Florists Who Create Kwangen Bouquets**

Alluna Florist was the first to introduce the kwangen bouquet in Denpasar, though they do not claim to be its original creator. Their first post featuring the bouquet was on April 25, 2024, followed by multiple uploads, including tutorials. Alluna Florist welcomed others to replicate the idea, seeing it as normal business practice. Their TikTok posts garnered significant attention, with one reaching 312,100 views. "Lalu Florist" (a pseudonym) chose to remain anonymous due to the controversy surrounding kwangen bouquet innovation. Though inspired before the trend, they hesitated to modify a sacred item. Once the bouquet gained popularity, they joined the trend. Keiko Flourish was founded by Made Shinta Devi Ayu Cahayani, a former wedding decorator who pivoted to snack bouquet arrangements. The name "Keiko" (Japanese for luck and honor) and "Flourish" reflect growth and creativity (KBBI Daring, 2024).

Meraki Craft began as a side hustle for Made Anggita during high school. She started making snack bouquets for friends and continued into college. The name "Meraki" (Greek for doing something with soul and love) aligns with the florist's values. Naomi Florist was founded by Kadek Pratiwi Saadi and a friend after completing community service. The name combines their nicknames. They operate without a physical store, fulfilling online orders. Their business originated directly from the kwangen bouquet trend.

### **Florist Motivation Behind Kwangen Bouquets**

Florists created kwangen bouquets after careful thought, aiming for profit. This aligns with goal-oriented social action. Florists like Keiko Flourish and Meraki Craft fulfilled customer requests, showing value-rational action. All florists, except Naomi, made kwangen bouquets as part of a habitual practice of innovating, reflecting traditional social action.

Table 1. The social actions of florist's motivations

<b>Florist</b>	<b>Rational</b>	<b>Value</b>	<b>Habit</b>
Alluna	Yes		Yes
Lalu	Yes		Yes
Keiko	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meraki	Yes	Yes	Yes
Naomi	Yes		

Most florists based their innovation on rational considerations and economic motives. Their habitual innovation and responsiveness to customer needs show how social action influences business strategies.

### **Commodification of Kwangen Bouquets**

Commodification involves producing something not for its utility but its exchange value, aiming at capital accumulation (Appadurai, 1986). The kwangen bouquet shows three types of commodification: spiritual cultural commodification, meaning shift, and capitalist cultural commodification. First, spiritual cultural commodification. Kwangen, originally made individually for prayer to enhance spiritual connection, is now sold in markets due to urban time constraints. Commercialization of kwangen became acceptable, supported by cultural scholars who acknowledged the change. One noted, "Kwangen used to be made by individuals but can now be bought due to changing lifestyles." The second is change meaning. Kwangen symbolizes gratitude toward the divine in Hinduism. The bouquet, however, is a commercial product used for celebrations. It is marketed on social media, appealing to younger audiences. Key differences are summarized below:

Table 2. The differences between kwangen and kwangen bouquet

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Kwangen</b>	<b>Bouquet</b>
Maker	Hinduism	Florists
Purpose	Harmony	Celebration
Materials	Natural	Additional
Size	5 cm	50-100 cm
Construction	Inserted	Attached
Tradition	Ancient	2024
Function	Worship	Celebration
Meaning	Gratitude	Appreciation
Cost	Rp0-5,000	Rp100,000
Sale Price	Rp1,000	Rp150,000

Last but not least, capitalist cultural commodification. The economic motive behind commodifying kwangen indicates how sacred symbols are adapted for profit. By setting aside sacred value, florists could creatively use kwangen elements in commercial bouquets. Though reflecting Balinese identity, the bouquet became a florist commodity with commercial worth. Similar flowers, sampian, kojong shapes, and banana leaf wrappers are used but applied differently for aesthetic appeal. Visual similarities include the use of banana leaves, similar flowers, and decorative sampian. However, in traditional kwangen, banana leaves are folded into kojong shapes, while bouquets use cardboard wrapped with banana leaves.

### **Public Perception of the Kwangen Bouquet**

Florists who create the kwangen bouquet come from diverse backgrounds. Alluna Florist, the pioneer of the kwangen bouquet trend on Balinese TikTok, saw this as an opportunity for creative expression. Beside of that, this commodification innovation not only generated profit but also opened up new business opportunities. Naomi Florist, for example, emerged directly from the kwangen bouquet trend. On the other hand, Meraki Craft expressed discomfort with the transformation of kwangen because she usually used kwangen for praying.

Many consumers who bought and shared kwangen bouquet videos on social media also believed the bouquet was acceptable. They argued that since the bouquet didn't replicate all sacred elements, it shouldn't be considered inappropriate. However, some consumers still voiced objections and suggested florists avoid using sacred symbols. A key perspective came from a Hindu religious leader who emphasized the importance of context and intention. While kwangen is a sacred item used to honor God, Hinduism allows for flexibility.

### **Kwangen Bouquet Success as an Innovation Product**

The success of the kwangen bouquet as a business innovation can be seen from the engagement metrics on posts that feature the product. Positive responses from various audiences to each florist's account—measured through likes, comments, views, saves, and shares—reflect the public's enthusiasm in welcoming the innovation as something new and attractive. Based on florist postings, the presence of the kwangen bouquet can be considered accepted by the public.

Table 3. Exposure of kwangen bouquet posts

<b>Florist</b>	<b>Views</b>	<b>Likes</b>	<b>Saved</b>	<b>Shared</b>
Alluna	312.1k	14.5k	1,759	1,567
Lalu	195.6k	11.8k	387	4,069
Keiko	203.7k	11.6k	907	1,162
Meraki	128.4k	2,264	473	382
Naomi	34.4k	488	95	118

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

The kwangen bouquet originated from inspiration rooted in Balinese Hindu culture. Although kwangen traditionally symbolizes gratitude to the divine, the kwangen bouquet has been largely accepted by Balinese Hindu society, especially in Denpasar. The change in function and meaning from traditional kwangen to kwangen bouquets illustrates the commodification. What was once sacred has taken on a secular function, with the bouquet now serving as a token of appreciation for personal achievements such as graduations, weddings, and milestones. The shift in economic value is also evident when comparing production costs and selling prices between traditional kwangen and kwangen bouquets.

The following suggestions can be made to many, florists kwangen bouquets in Denpasar should continue to explore new innovations, especially those that embrace the local wisdom of Balinese culture. The Denpasar governments should pay more attention to creative industry players, such as florists, so they can continue to develop and explore new innovations. The general public should carefully assess the latest

innovations created by, for, and from the community. This will hopefully provide a better perspective for interpreting existing innovations. For further research, it is recommended to expand the scope of informants and object. This research can be expanded include florists outside Denpasar and other innovations.

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