



Batik: Souvenirs with Local Wisdom in Tourism Destinations

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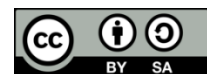
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ABSTRACT

Batik is one of Indonesia's iconic cultural heritages with great potential as a leading product in the creative economy sector and a typical souvenir of tourist destinations. However, the batik industry faces various challenges, such as low labor costs, lack of design and production technology innovation, and minimal utilization of business intelligence to support exports to global markets. This study aims to identify opportunities and challenges in developing batik as a competitive tourist destination souvenir in the international market. Using the methods of data collection and consolidation, information needs analysis, and strategy development, this research proposes a framework for mapping batik potential. Government support through regulations and marketing strategies for batik as a craft art includes market penetration, market development, product development, and diversification. A strategic approach that integrates innovation, sustainability, and community empowerment is expected to expand batik's role as a cultural symbol as well as a significant export commodity.

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1. Introduction

Batik is one of Indonesia's most iconic cultural heritages. As a cloth painted with motifs that reflect cultural values, traditions, and local resources, batik is closely linked to the identity of the Indonesian people. The unique and symbolic process of making batik has made it more than just a cloth—it is an expression of art, tradition, and life philosophy that is inherent from birth to death. Bathik is the original Javanese term for patterned cloth which is made by painting/writing wax on plain cloth. The word hambathik, which means making bathik, is found in Babad Sengkala (1633) and Panji Jaya Lengkara (1770). In previous years or centuries, the term batik has not been found in inscriptions or in literary books, but other terms were used, namely cinitra (painted), tinulis (written), or sinurat (written) followed by the name of the motif [1]. Motifs in batik are decorative and contain philosophical values and narratives that become an integral part of the identity of the community that produces them [2]. The process of making batik involves several steps including the application of wax to the cloth, dyeing, and removal of the wax to reveal the final design. Techniques that can be found in various forms of batik, such as written batik and stamped batik, each have their own historical and cultural context [3]. Batik, which has aesthetic value, also serves as an educational medium, especially in instilling character values in students, as shown in research that integrates batik motifs into the educational curriculum [4].

Batik also reflects the socio-economic dynamics in Indonesian society. Batik production has evolved into a livelihood for many artisans, especially women, who use this craft as a means of economic empowerment. There is research that highlights the role of community training programs aimed at improving skills in batik production, which encourage creativity and promote entrepreneurship among local communities [5]. This initiative is crucial to preserving traditional crafts while adapting them to modern market demands. In addition, the environmental aspects of batik production have received attention, particularly regarding the use of natural dyes and sustainable practices. Recent studies have explored the potential of using organic materials, such as leaves, to dye fabrics, thus encouraging eco-friendly methods in batik production [6]. This shift towards sustainability is important to address the environmental challenges caused by traditional dyeing processes that often involve harmful chemicals.

Besides its artistic and economic value, batik plays an important role in cultural identity and social cohesion. Motifs and patterns often tell stories about historical events, social values, and local beliefs, thus serving as a narrative medium that connects generations [7]. The global recognition of batik has boosted its presence in various international cultural exchanges, enhancing its status as a symbol of Indonesian heritage. The designation of batik as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO affirms its importance and encourages efforts to promote and preserve the art [8]. This recognition has increased interest in batik among international audiences, leading to collaborations and exhibitions that showcase its beauty and complexity.

Historically, the term bathik or now referred to as began to be used in Java in the XVII century as written in Babad Sengkala. However, batik was made long before the XVII century. This is evidenced by the information contained in inscriptions and literary manuscripts which mention many types of cloth, including fabrics that are thought to be made of batik [1], [9]. Various types of ornamental motifs, both geometric and non-

geometric, have been known since prehistoric times. The chosen motifs depict high philosophical values, especially related to their beliefs [10]. Therefore, various ornamental motifs can be found on artifacts and in temples, which are representations of various motifs encountered at that time, including fabric motifs [11]–[14]. The oldest motif depicted on statues wearing patterned cloth is the kawung motif, a geometric motif that dates back to prehistoric times [15].

In the following period, many other motifs were found that were adopted from various cultures that contributed to coloring Javanese culture at that time. For example, the banji motif and cloud motif from China, and the paṭola motif from India. Batik motifs developed rapidly in the XVII century with more and more classic motifs being created, based on previous traditions. Doellah (2002) [16] states that from batik motifs, we can learn the history and cultural environment that colored it. Broadly speaking, there are two types of batik in Java, namely inland batik and coastal batik. Based on its history and environment, Doellah divides batik motifs into kraton batik, kraton-influenced batik, sudagaran batik and peasant batik, Indian-influenced batik, Dutch batik, Chinese batik, Javanese Hokokai batik, and Indonesian batik. The types and patterns of traditional batik are very numerous, but the patterns and variations follow the philosophy and culture of each region which is very diverse. The rich cultural heritage of the Indonesian nation has encouraged the birth of various styles and types of traditional batik with its specific characteristics. Over time, international recognition of batik grew stronger after UNESCO designated it as the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. This recognition emphasizes that batik not only has cultural value but is also an important economic asset for Indonesia.

Each batik motif has unique characteristics that reflect the social, historical, and aesthetic values of the society that created it, so batik motifs can be understood as a combination of lines, shapes, and isen that form a unified visual entity, reflecting the social and cultural identity of the wearer [4]. In several studies on batik motifs, it was found that certain motifs often have meanings related to the character or traits expected of the wearer. For example, the batik motif of Pasedahan Suropati in Pasuruan depicts wisdom, which is expected to be internalized by the person wearing it. This shows that batik motifs function as symbols of moral values and character traits to be conveyed to the community.

Batik motifs can also be categorized based on themes or elements taken from nature, culture, and daily life. For example, flora and fauna motifs often inspire batik making, such as flowers, leaves or animals that have certain meanings in local culture [17]. Motifs in batik serve to beautify batik cloth as well as represent the environment and culture of the community concerned [14]. The development of batik motifs is also influenced by the innovation and creativity of batik craftsmen. In recent years, many craftsmen have begun to develop new motif designs that combine traditional elements with contemporary styles, thus creating more interesting variations that are relevant to the times [18]. This will enrich the art of batik and provide opportunities for artisans to compete in a wider market. With the increase of batik with motifs that are rich in meaning and aesthetics, it will be able to attract the attention of consumers, thereby increasing the income of the craftsmen [19].

In an economic context, batik has become one of the leading products in the creative economy sector, both as a souvenir typical of tourist destinations and as an export

commodity. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2022, the export value of Indonesian batik reached US\$ 25.31 million or around Rp 392.74 billion with a volume of 987.71 thousand kilograms. Meanwhile, the performance of batik export value reached USD17.45 million in 2023. Batik from Indonesia is mostly exported to countries: The United States (74.75% share), Germany (3.61%), Singapore (3.23%), Malaysia (2.82%), and Canada (1.92%). (Indonesian Export Financing Agency, 2024). One of the main challenges faced by batik MSMEs is that they still rely on traditional methods and lack adaptation to technological developments and market trends. Therefore, the application of open innovation theory and stakeholder engagement is important to overcome this challenge. By involving the government, academics, and the community in the innovation process, batik MSMEs can develop products that are more competitive and relevant to market needs [20]. Therefore, it is important to identify policies that can support the sustainability of batik businesses, including training and financial support for batik entrepreneurs in adopting sustainable practices [21].

Human resource development (HRD) by improving the skills and knowledge of batik entrepreneurs can catalyze green entrepreneurship, which is increasingly important in the era of environmental awareness. Through proper training and education, batik entrepreneurs can implement technical innovations and sustainable industrial processes, thereby increasing their competitiveness in the global market [22]. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many MSMEs experienced a decline in demand and productivity. A study shows that batik entrepreneurs who can adapt to this situation, such as by utilizing digital platforms for marketing and sales, have a greater chance of surviving and thriving [23]. Entrepreneurship in batik can also contribute to community empowerment. Mentoring programs conducted in batik villages, such as in Giriloyo, show positive impacts in improving product quality, income and job creation. By empowering local communities through entrepreneurship training, the batik industry can help improve community welfare and preserve local culture [24]. Entrepreneurship in batik can play a role in keeping cultural heritage alive [25]. This shows that entrepreneurship in batik focuses not only on the economic aspect, but also on preserving the culture and identity of the community.

Despite its great potential, the batik industry is faced with a number of challenges. Issues such as the low cost of labour, lack of innovation in design and production technology, and the lack of utilization of business intelligence to map the global market are major obstacles in optimizing batik exports. The industry also faces pressure to remain relevant in a competitive international market, especially in creating value-added products that suit global consumer preferences. For this reason, this study aims to map the challenges and opportunities in developing batik as a tourist destination souvenir that can compete in the global market. By utilizing primary data on craft exports, this research will develop an identification of batik's potential to support a sustainable batik marketing strategy. This study is expected to assist the batik industry in evaluating business mapping, identifying new market opportunities, and creating highly competitive product innovations. Combining the support of government regulations, collaboration between stakeholders, and the development of data-based marketing strategies are important steps in realizing this vision.

2. Method

This study used the research methods of data collection and consolidation, determination of information needs, and strategy development. This research identified the opportunities and challenges of batik as well as proposed a framework for mapping the potential of batik as a tourist destination souvenir. In addition, it incorporates support from the government in the regulation of batik marketing strategies as a craft art which includes several aspects including 1) market penetration, marketing existing products, 2) market development, marketing products to potential customers or new markets, 3) product development, marketing new products to existing customers, 4) diversification, marketing new products to customers.

3. Results and Discussion

Strategic planning is needed to overcome these problems. These strategic steps involve various approaches, such as increasing labor efficiency, applying modern technology, diversifying products, and strengthening branding and data-based marketing. With the right strategy, souvenirs will not only be able to compete in the local market but also become a significant export commodity in the international market. The following section outlines the main challenges faced in developing souvenirs and the strategic steps that can be taken to improve their competitiveness. The analysis is based on research data and a proposed potential mapping framework to support data-driven decision-making in the souvenir industry.

Table 1. Strategic planning challenges in the field of souvenirs

Strategic planning in the field of souvenirs	Description
Low labor costs	Low labor costs are due to the minimal wages of workers, which can affect the quality of life of employees. However, it is also a challenge to improve efficiency and productivity.
Low competitiveness	Souvenir products face challenges to compete with similar products from other countries due to a lack of innovation, product quality, or international marketing capabilities.
Traditional management	Management of souvenir businesses is still done conventionally, making little use of modern technology such as digitalization or data-based management systems.
Low production capacity	Small businesses often have limitations in terms of equipment, labor, or raw materials, leading to limited production volumes to meet market demand.
Less innovation	Lack of innovation in design, production techniques or product diversification makes souvenir products less attractive in local and global markets.

Source1 Personal Data (2024)

Market Opportunities for Cultural Souvenirs: Batik

Global trends show a growing interest in cultural souvenirs, especially those that reflect local identity, uniqueness, and historical value. According to projections, the global souvenir market is expected to reach \$16.6 billion by 2024, indicating a great opportunity for creative industry players in Indonesia, including batik producers, to expand their market reach. As a cultural product recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, batik has a unique added value that can be leveraged to attract international market interest. Demand for batik products is driven not only by its function as clothing but also by its potential as a distinctive souvenir that reflects local craftsmanship and cultural heritage. Therefore, the integration of batik into the tourism and creative economy sectors offers strategic opportunities.

One concrete example is the development of Borobudur Batik inspired by Borobudur Temple, which is one of the world heritage sites. Research by Aryanti shows that although Borobudur Temple is a well-known tourist destination, Borobudur's typical souvenir products, such as batik, have not been fully utilized. Therefore, the development of Borobudur Batik as a souvenir can be a strategy to attract more tourists and introduce them to the richness of local culture [26]. This is in line with other studies that emphasize the importance of local product development to support tourism, such as the one conducted in Kemloko Village with Reyog Bulkiyo batik [27]. In the context of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), batik also plays an important role in the national economy. According to Mandasari et al., MSMEs in the batik craft sector, such as Batik Magenda in Bondowoso, contribute significantly to the local and national economy [28].

Batik is not only marketed as fabric or clothing, but also adapted into souvenir products such as bags, wallets, scarves, trinkets, and even home decoration elements. Diversification opens up opportunities to reach a wider market segment, including the younger generation and international travelers. Expanding to new markets, such as countries with a large Indonesian diaspora or countries with an interest in Southeast Asian art and culture, is a strategic move. Marketing batik not only as a product, but also as a cultural experience. For example, tourists visiting tourist destinations can be invited to engage in hands-on batik making, enriching their experience and creating an emotional attachment to the product. The stories behind batik motifs, the intricate process of making them, as well as the philosophies contained in them can be the main attraction to increase the selling value of the product.

Global e-commerce platforms such as Amazon, Etsy, or regional platforms in Asia can be used to reach the global market. This strategy allows batik products to reach international consumers without geographical restrictions. The use of social media for promotion, such as showcasing the batik-making process live or sharing inspiring stories about local batik makers, can help create awareness and increase the appeal of the products. By utilizing business intelligence technology, batik producers can identify market trends, consumer preferences and regions with high demand potential. This analysis helps in targeting promotions, adjusting product designs, and optimizing marketing strategies. Integrate batik as part of the tourism experience in a particular destination. For example, providing batik workshops in tourist villages or selling batik souvenirs in popular places such as airports, hotels, and tourist information centers. Collaborate with travel agents and tour guides to promote Batik as one of the main attractions for tourists. With this approach, batik can capitalize on existing market opportunities, strengthen its position as a leading

cultural souvenir, and contribute significantly to the local and national economy. This strengthening of competitiveness is also in line with the government's vision of advancing the creative economy and capitalizing on the export potential of Indonesian cultural products in the global market.

Opportunities and Obstacles of Batik as a Tourism Souvenir Compared with Other Cultural Heritage

Batik has a great opportunity to develop as a superior souvenir in the tourism sector. The cultural significance of batik as a UNESCO-recognized Intangible Cultural Heritage gives it added value, making it a symbol of Indonesian identity and artistry. This recognition attracts tourists who seek authentic cultural experiences. Moreover, market demand for cultural souvenirs is increasing, with the global market projected to reach \$16.6 billion by 2024 in the United States alone. Batik can capitalize on this trend by positioning itself as a distinctive product that reflects traditional craftsmanship and values.

Community-based tourism approaches, such as those implemented in Giriloyo Batik Tourism Village, are also an important opportunity. The program integrates batik production with tourism activities, providing opportunities for tourists to participate directly in batik-making workshops. This model not only increases tourist engagement but also supports the economic empowerment of local communities while preserving traditional techniques. On the other hand, innovation in design is a key factor in enhancing batik's appeal, with product diversification such as modern apparel, accessories and home décor catering to contemporary market tastes.

However, batik also faces a number of obstacles. One of them is competition from cheap imitation products that enter the global market. These copycat products often diminish appreciation of the quality and authenticity of authentic Indonesian batik. In addition, the lack of product innovation compared to other cultural heritages, such as culinary arts or crafts that are more adaptable to the needs of the international market, is a challenge in itself. Many batik products are still focused on traditional fabrics or formal wear, while tourists often seek more practical and modern products.

Another constraining factor is the perception of low labor costs. While this provides an advantage in terms of competitive pricing, it can lower the quality image of batik in the eyes of global consumers if not matched by improved production and design standards. Therefore, it is important to market batik as a high-quality product by highlighting the uniqueness, authenticity, and philosophy behind its motifs. Through a strategy that integrates innovation, sustainability, and collaboration with local communities, batik has the potential to expand its role as a cultural souvenir that not only reflects traditional heritage but also meets the needs of global travelers.

Key Strategies for Incorporating Batik into Tourism Attractions and Activities

Cultural and Educational Experience

Organizing batik workshops that involve tourists in the batik-making process gives them an immersive, hands-on experience. Programs such as those offered by Lukman Batik, which allow tourists to learn the history of Batik and its techniques, can enrich the tourist experience and result in souvenirs that have personal value. Participants not only gain a deeper understanding of the art of batik but also new skills and products that they make

themselves. This creates a strong emotional connection with the batik product and increases its selling value as a souvenir. In addition, arranging tours that take tourists to visit local artisans or batik villages to see first-hand the batik-making process from start to finish can increase appreciation for batik products. Such a tour allows visitors to witness the traditional skills used in batik making, as well as allowing them to purchase authentic batik products directly from the maker. It also introduces them to the social and cultural aspects behind batik making, connecting them more deeply with Indonesia's cultural heritage. This kind of experience can be an added attraction in an arts and crafts-focused tour package.

Marketing and Promotion

Marketing batik as part of a tourist attraction requires a smart strategy, combining local and global approaches. Batik products can be promoted in a way that is engaging and touches on deep cultural aspects, both through introducing the story or history of Batik and through emphasizing its unique techniques and designs. The use of social media and e-commerce platforms would be very effective for marketing batik globally, while local promotion could involve integrating batik in broader tourism activities, such as cultural festivals, art exhibitions, or batik-making together at tourist destinations.

Strategies to maximize the potential of batik as a superior souvenir in the tourism sector, the main focus is to highlight its uniqueness and cultural value: the importance of promoting the uniqueness of batik through its patterns, colors, and design meanings, which can attract tourists seeking authentic cultural experiences. Collaboration with local artisans was also mentioned to create exclusive products and represent the cultural identity of a region. In addition, sustainability and community engagement: emphasize the importance of community-based tourism, where local communities are involved in the production and promotion of batik. In addition, environmentally friendly practices such as the use of natural dyes are proposed to enhance the appeal of batik for tourists who are concerned about sustainability issues. Then, offering a variety of batik products (e.g. clothing, home décor, accessories) to meet the diverse needs of tourists. Also, providing customization options on batik products to create a more personalized and memorable experience for tourists.

4. Conclusion

The most effective marketing strategies for promoting Batik as a viable export commodity include focused marketing on specific segments, product innovation, and leveraging human resources assets, as these strategies enhance competitiveness and align with Batik SMEs' resource limitations.

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