

DAYUN WHISPERS IN BATIK: BUILDING LOCAL CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH DAYUN WRITING BATIK

Annisa Aulia Insani^{1a}, Hambali^{2b}

¹²Universitas Riau

E-mail: annisaauliainsani2@gmail.com,
hambali@lecture.unri.ac.id

(* Corresponding Author
annisaauliainsani2@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Batik Seni Tulis Dayun is a manifestation of local culture that represents the identity, values, and narrative of the Dayun Village community, Siak Regency. This research aims to examine the production process, the symbolic meaning of the motifs, and the marketing strategy of Batik Seni Tulis Dayun as a form of cultural preservation in the midst of modernization and digitalization. Using an ethnographic approach with participant observation and in-depth interview methods, this research highlights how each stage in the production process from motif printing, pencantingan, coloring, lorod, to finishing has a strong charge of traditional and educational values. The motifs, such as watermelon leaves, pompa angguk, olang-olang dance, and senduduk leaves, were born from the socio-economic reality of the community and reflect their closeness to the natural environment and local culture. In terms of marketing, businesses are utilizing digital platforms and collaboration with the local industry sector to increase exposure and competitiveness. However, challenges such as the digital divide, limited technical training, and lack of regeneration of young batik makers still hamper the development of these businesses. This study emphasizes the importance of cross-sectoral support in maintaining the sustainability of Batik Seni Tulis Dayun as a superior cultural product that can compete in the market while strengthening local identity.

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INTRODUCTIONS

Written art batik is one of the artistic expressions that not only reflects aesthetic beauty, but also acts as a medium for representation of local cultural values (Rizal Fauzi, 2024) In the midst of globalization and cultural homogenization, written art batik is present as a symbol of resistance and identity affirmation (Iskandar & Kustiyah, 2016). Dayun Village, located in Siak Regency, Riau, is a real example of how a local community can build its cultural identity through batik art. The presence of Dayun Writing Batik is not only a product of the creative economy, but also as a symbol of resistance to cultural homogenization as well as a means to strengthen the identity of the local community.

The existence of distinctive motifs in batik does not only function as visual decoration, but as a symbolic language that stores historical narratives, life philosophies, and social structures of the local community (Machdalena et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding batik is not enough only from the visual side, but also from the cultural and sociological aspects that accompany it. Each motif carries a message that distinguishes cultural identity between regions in Indonesia, while showing local wealth that must be preserved.

Written art batik motifs are generally born from the collective experience of the community, the natural environment, and the spiritual values that develop in the local community. For example, Ciwaringin batik motifs from Cirebon contain elements of local flora and fauna that not only strengthen visual identity, but also become a symbol of people's attachment to the surrounding nature (Machdalena et al., 2023). In another context, traditional motifs such as kawung, parang, or truntum from Java have a deep philosophical meaning, reflecting the relationship between humans, God, and others (Astuti et al., 2023). These motifs are part of the local cultural identity that is inherited across generations, making written art batik a living and growing cultural artifact.

The process of making Batik Seni Tulis itself cannot be separated from the values of tradition and local wisdom (Wahyu Tri Atmojo, Misgiya, 2025). This process requires high skills, perseverance, and mastery of techniques that are inherited from generation to generation. Starting from pattern making, waxing, coloring, to pelorodan, each stage contains educational and spiritual values that strengthen the character of batik as an intangible cultural heritage (Taufiqoh et al., 2018). This work is usually done by women in the community, making batik art written as a space for women's expression and contribution to cultural preservation. In addition, the manual process reflects patience, perseverance, and the spirit of maintaining cultural originality in the midst of instant technological developments.

However, the sustainability of written art batik is greatly influenced by the right distribution and marketing strategy. In today's digital era, batik is no longer only marketed through traditional markets or art galleries, but also through online platforms and social media. Digital-based marketing strategies are a solution to reach a wider range of consumers, especially the younger generation who are familiar with technology (Destiny & Hosnan, 2021). In addition, strengthening local branding by raising the story behind batik motifs is also an effective strategy to increase the attractiveness and selling value of written art batik (Karimah et al., 2024). The role of the creative community and collaboration with the tourism sector is important in expanding the batik distribution network as a superior cultural product.

However, the written art batik industry still faces various challenges in its production and preservation process. Starting from the limitations of the regeneration of young batik, the difficulty of obtaining natural raw materials, to the lack of protection of intellectual property rights on traditional motifs are real obstacles (Putra & Melati, 2022). In addition, the entry of cheap and bulk printed batik-patterned textile products in the market also reduces public interest in written art batik which is more expensive and requires a long production time. This is where the role of education, media, and government policies becomes crucial to encourage preservation and innovation in the art of written batik as part of the development of national cultural identity.

In the future, the hope for the existence of written art batik is to make it a strategic instrument in the development of inclusive and sustainable local culture. By integrating batik into educational curricula, community training programs, and cross-sector promotions such as tourism and the creative economy, written art batik can develop not only as an aesthetic product, but also as a cultural and economic force of society (Zubaedah & Hidayah, 2023). Furthermore, the preservation of written art batik is also a shared responsibility between the community, industry players, academics, and the government in maintaining cultural heritage that reflects local values while strengthening the nation's identity in the eyes of the world.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses an ethnographic approach and data collection techniques mainly through participant observation and also through interviews. This ethnographic approach aims to provide a holistic picture of the research

subjects with an emphasis on photographing the daily experiences of individuals by observing and interviewing them and others related to the subject (Sari et al., 2023). The purpose of this study is to understand how Dayun Batik Seni Tulis plays a role in building the local cultural identity of the people of Dayun Village. This research seeks to describe in depth the batik production process from beginning to end, starting from the stages of drawing motifs, night charming, coloring, to the marketing process. In addition, this research also aims to reveal the symbolic meaning contained in the batik motifs made, as well as how local cultural values are manifested in the artwork.

In particular, this study aims to examine how Dayun Written Art Batik is not only a handicraft product, but also a medium for cultural expression and the identity of the local community in the midst of social changes due to the development of village tourism. Thus, this research is expected to show that the preservation of batik is not only about maintaining techniques and motifs, but also about maintaining the sustainability of cultural narratives, traditional values, and local economic empowerment that is rooted in community wisdom.

Interviews were conducted with related parties such as the owner of Batik Seni Tulis Dayun and also several related stakeholders who know and understand the development of batik as part of the local culture of Dayun Village. Interviews are conducted in a structured and open manner. The main informant in this study is the pioneer and craftsman of Batik Seni Tulis Dayun, who has direct experience in producing and introducing batik to the wider community. In addition, interviews were also conducted with community leaders, village administrators, and parties involved in MSME empowerment programs and tourism village development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Fabric to Identity: The Production Process of Dayun Writing Batik

1. Batik Motif Printing Process



Figure 1. (a) Motif Printing Process (b) Motif Printing Results

The initial process in the production of Dayun Seni Tulis Batik is the process of printing motifs which requires a very high level of precision. The tools and materials needed in this initial process are white cloth with a size of 2 meters 30 cm, pencils, right hand rulers, motif prints and also night candles that have been heated according to a predetermined temperature. For the next stage, the fabric as the basic material is laid out on a table lined with a wet mattress and also transparent plastic that has been modified in such a way. The function of the table that has been modified with a wet mattress and transparent plastic is as a special work base during the process of printing batik motifs using stamps that have been dipped in melted night candles. A table that has been modified with a wet mattress and transparent plastic plays an important role in maintaining the stability of the fabric, preventing damage and ensuring that the motif is printed neatly during the printing process. The patterns to be printed generally follow the special request from the customer. Even so, artisans also often produce motifs for supplies, which are largely inspired by their local cultural richness.

2. Stirring Process



Figure 2. Batik Wrapping Process

The next process is the process of shingling. The process of settling is one of the important processes in making batik, even though the initial motif has been formed, but this cating process is useful because it is done to thicken or reaffirm the motif that has been printed. Using canting filled with hot night candles, craftsmen painstakingly follow the pattern groove, emphasizing each line so that no color goes out of bounds when the dyeing is done. It is this night candle that will be the protector of the motif, keeping every detail intact and clear as the color begins to be applied to the surface of the fabric. In addition to the function of reaffirming the motif, this enchantment process is also carried out to add other motifs that are not present in the print such as the polka dot motif.



(a)

(b)

Figure 3. (a) Batik Dyeing Process (b) Temporary Dyeing Results

After passing the process of printing motifs and enchantment, the next stage is to give the basic color and also the color to the motif. This coloring is done using brushes that have been modified in such a way that it facilitates the coloring process. This coloring process has a fairly high level of difficulty for beginners even though it looks very easy to do. Each motif and line must be carefully colored so that no color leaks out of the base color.

3. Lorod Process

The lorod process is the process of removing the night candle as well as the batik washing process that has already been made. Night candles function as a barrier between the coloring of the motif with each other or a barrier between the color of the motif and the basic color of batik. With the loss of candles, batik motifs and colors will look more vivid and perfect. In the process of this lorod there is also a process of strengthening the color on the batik so that the resulting color is clearer.

4. Drying and Finishing Process



Figure 4. Batik Drying Process

The drying process is the final process in baping. This process is traditionally carried out by utilizing sunlight as the main source of drying. Because this process depends on the intensity of the sun, this drying process cannot be measured specifically, if the weather is sunny and hot, it only takes 6 hours of the drying process, but if the weather is not friendly, it will take 2-3 days. After this process is completed, the next process is the finishing of batik, batik will be seen in detail on each part, so that if a defect occurs, it will be repaired immediately.

A Reflection of Locality: Batik Motifs of Dayun Writing Art

The motifs used in Dayun Writing Art Batik were born from the daily life of the people of Dayun Village, making it a direct representation of the local social, natural, and cultural environment. Unlike classic batik motifs that are loaded with philosophy or mythology, the motifs in Dayun Batik actually display a meaningful simplicity, which is a reflection of the identity and character of the community that forms it.

One of the motifs that is quite prominent is the watermelon leaf and watermelon motif. This motif reflects the local economic reality of the Dayun people who are known as one of the producers of watermelon in the region. The depiction of watermelon in batik is not intended as a metaphorical symbol, but as a form of pride in the produce which is an important part of people's livelihoods.

Another motif that is no less interesting is the nodding pump motif, which represents the closeness of the Dayun people to the oil and gas industry activities. Dayun Village is indeed around the operational area of oil and gas companies, so the symbolism of the nodding pump in batik is a way for people to capture their socio-economic lives in visual media. Although it looks simple, this motif holds a strong narrative about the relationship between local communities and the industrial sector that helps shape the dynamics of their lives.

In addition, there is also an olang-olang dance motif, which is one of the traditional arts of the Dayun people. This motif is a symbol of efforts to preserve local culture through batik art. By raising the form of movement and visual elements of the dance, Dayun batik becomes a medium for preserving the cultural expression of the community which is currently facing the flow of modernization and social change due to the development of village tourism.

The next motif is the seating leaves. The origin of the motif of this senduduk leaf came from the view of Penghulu Dayun who saw that there were wild senduduk leaves that grew and developed around Dayun village.

Senduduk leaves also include medicinal leaves and also the hope of being able to have children soon. According to the confession of the owner of Dayun Batik Seni Tulis, Kak Ana, she was advised by the Dayun Village Ruler to add this Senduduk Leaf motif as her latest motif, she got a story that if there is a Senduduk Leaf that is flowering and blooming, it is a sign that there is a girl who will soon have a child, therefore, the Senduduk leaf motif has a meaning as a hope to have children soon for married couples who have not been blessed with a baby.

Therefore, even though the motifs in Dayun Batik Do not have a metaphysical or religious symbolic meaning, each stroke and pattern still contains a local meaning. Batik Dayun is a forum for people to express their identity both as farmers, MSME actors, oil and gas villagers, and traditional keepers. Behind seemingly simple motifs, hidden is the collective spirit and awareness to perpetuate "*who we are*" in a visible and sustainable form.

Production to Distribution: Marketing Strategy of Dayun Writing Batik

Based on the results of interviews and observations that have been made while in the field, the strategy carried out by the owner of Batik Seni Tulis Dayun is to apply online marketing strategies such as Facebook, Tiktok, WhatsApp and also personal Instagram. Partnerships with external parties are also carried out by the owners of Dayun Batik Seni Tulis, such as the oil and gas industry that is operating in Dayun village, namely BUMD. PT. The earth is my heart. Although the Dayun Tulis Batik MSMEs are not fostered by BSP, the owners of Dayun Tulis Batik also benefit from the existence of BSP, namely by purchasing batik during events and welcoming guests. This shows that the existence of BSP not only has an impact on its fostered MSMEs, but also provides economic benefits for other business actors, such as the owner of Dayun Seni Tulis Batik. Through the collaboration carried out, the owner of Batik Seni Tulis Dayun gets a greater opportunity to market his batik products, in addition to increasing sales, this opportunity also helps to expand the market reach and increase the exposure and competitiveness of his products in the midst of growing competition in the batik industry.



Figure 5. A Paper Bag That Makes Me Feel Like A Piece of Paper

In an effort to support the marketing of Batik and its fostered MSMEs, BSP also contributes by providing *exclusive paper bags* for KUB Se Desa Kaya. KUB Se Desa Kaya is a Joint Business Group of Watermelon and All Works whose business is to create products made from watermelon raw materials both from processed food and handicrafts. This assistance in the form of *paper bags* is aimed at the KUB Se Desa Kaya, although Mrs. Ana is not an MSME fostered by BSP but has a relationship as a partner in the buying and selling relationship, KUB Se Desa Kaya opens the opportunity for Mrs. Ana to use the *paper bag* as a form of support for MSMEs in Dayun.

This assistance is not just ordinary packaging, but an aesthetic touch that beautifies the appearance of the product, while increasing the attractiveness of Dayun's typical batik in the eyes of customers. *The paper bags* given are designed with an elegant design, featuring Dayun's typical souvenirs that reflect local wisdom. With this more professional packaging, Dayun batik is now not only superior in the quality of the fabric and motifs, but also in the

presentation that is increasingly attractive. Support like this is not only a small step but also a meaningful step in encouraging Dayun batik to be more widely known. Not only as a beautifully patterned fabric, but also as a representation of culture that is elegantly packaged and ready to compete in a wider market.

Challenges and Expectations

One of the main challenges faced in the development of Dayun Batik Seni Tulis lies not only in the production process, but also in the marketing aspect. As an MSME actor who works independently, Mrs. Ana as the owner of Batik Seni Tulis Dayun faces obstacles in marketing her products to a wider audience. The lack of technical knowledge about digital platforms and the lack of optimal use of information technology are real obstacles in expanding market reach.

A simple story emerged when Yunqi, one of the village officials as well as Mrs. Ana's discussion partner, suggested that Dayun's Batik Seni Tulis began to be promoted through social media and digital platforms, reminding that promotion is an important part of business sustainability. Yunqi even suggested that Ibu Ana create an online store and register her business on Google Maps. The batik business registration suggestion has been implemented with the help of Yunqi, so that it makes it easier for visitors to access to come directly to the location without the need to share *the location* manually as Mrs. Ana usually does. Giving a *share location* manually often leads to another place, namely Batik 69, a batik MSME fostered by BSP which is now in a vacuum. When I first came to the Batik Seni Tulis Dayun MSMEs, the researcher himself was made lost and finally had to ask directly to the local residents.

This situation shows that there is still a considerable digital gap in the management and marketing of batik businesses at the local level. Reliance on conventional methods causes the promotion process to be less efficient and inhibits the wider market potential. Challenges like this are not only experienced by Mrs. Ana, but also by many MSME actors in the region who do not have access or skills in using digital technology to support their businesses.

In addition to the challenges in promotion, other expectations also come from the batik production side itself. Mrs. Ana as the main actor of Batik Seni Tulis Dayun said that she had a desire to deepen her skills in color mixing techniques. So far, the basic colors she uses are still limited, and she hopes to learn more about how to create color variations from mixing existing materials to make her batik motifs richer and more attractive. Unfortunately, until now there has been no special training or assistance that facilitates these needs. The desire to develop exists, but it is bumped into limited access to information and resources. In fact, the ability to create color variations is not only important in terms of aesthetics, but also in terms of product competitiveness in an increasingly competitive market.

Therefore, Mrs. Ana's hope as the owner of Dayun Writing Art Batik is not only to increase marketing capacity, but also to technical training and the development of more in-depth basic batik skills such as mixing basic colors that can produce various other types of colors. If this need can be facilitated by related institutions, whether through government programs, BUMDs, or local community initiatives, then Batik Seni Tulis Dayun has a great opportunity to continue to grow as a symbol of local cultural identity that has high quality and marketability.

CONCLUSION

Dayun Writing Batik is a local cultural product that not only highlights visual beauty, but also functions as a medium for expressing the identity and narrative of the people of Dayun Village. The manufacturing process involves intricate and meaningful stages, from motif printing, embellishment, coloring, to lorod and finishing, all of which reflect the precision, skill, and values of tradition that have been passed down from generation to generation. Dayun Batik motifs were born from the daily life of the local community, such as watermelon leaf motifs, nod pumps, olang-olang dances, and senduduk leaves. Each motif represents the local economic, social, and cultural reality, and is a symbol of community pride and hope. Although simple, these motifs are full of local meaning and are a reflection of the collective identity of Dayun residents.

In terms of marketing, Batik Seni Tulis Dayun utilizes digital strategies through social media and collaboration with external parties, such as local oil and gas companies. Support from various parties, including the provision of

exclusive packaging, helps to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of batik products in an increasingly competitive market. However, Dayun Batik industry players still face challenges such as the regeneration of young batik, the limitation of natural raw materials, and competition with mass-printed batik products. Therefore, the preservation of Dayun Writing Batik requires synergy between the community, business actors, the government, and the education sector, so that batik remains a strategic instrument in strengthening local cultural identity while encouraging community economic empowerment.

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