

Transformation Of Batik As A Symbol Of Nationalism And National Identity

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| INFO ARTIKEL | ABSTRAK |
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| Accepted : October 25, 2024 Revised : November 15, 2024 Approved : November 30. 2024 | Batik, as Indonesia's cultural heritage, has undergone a significant transformation, making it a symbol of nationalism and a deep national identity. As a cultural expression that reflects the diversity of ethnicities, religions, and customs in Indonesia, batik is now not only used in state events, but also in daily life. Each |
| Keywords : transformation of | batik motif originating from various regions contains rich |
| batik, nationalism, national identity | philosophical and historical meanings, depicting the richness of Indonesia's local culture. The recognition of batik by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009 further strengthens its position as a symbol of national pride recognized at the international level. The main challenge faced by batik is maintaining its authenticity and quality in the midst of globalization and the rise of mass production that does not follow traditional batik techniques. Therefore, it is important to preserve batik through education and training in batik skills for the younger generation, as well as carry out sustainable promotion in the global market. Batik also has a significant economic impact, creating jobs for local artisans and introducing Indonesian culture to the international world. With design innovations and techniques that still prioritize traditional values, batik can continue to survive and develop in the modern era, playing an important role in strengthening Indonesia's cultural identity at the global level. |

INTRODUCTION

Batik is one of the cultural heritages that not only displays the beauty of art, but also contains deep historical values, symbolism, and philosophy that reflect the lives of the Indonesian people (Amalia *et al.*, 2024). This art has developed over the centuries and has become an integral part of the nation's identity. Each batik motif has its own meaning, ranging from a symbol of happiness, courage, to symbols of religion and spirituality. Not surprisingly, batik is used in various traditional ceremonies, from marriage, birth, to death, as a symbol of hope, prayer, and blessings. The uniqueness of batik also lies in the differences in motifs owned by each region in Indonesia (Prasetyo., 2016). Batik from Yogyakarta and Solo, for example, has patterns that tend to be classic with brown and dark blue colors, as well as patterns such as machetes and kawung that are full of symbolism. These motifs are often associated with the Javanese royal family



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and reflect nobility. On the other hand, batik from the northern coast of Java, such as Pekalongan and Cirebon, features bright colors and freer motifs, influenced by interactions with foreign cultures such as China and Arabia. This shows that batik is a dynamic art and is able to adapt to the development of the times and other cultural influences (Djuhara., 2024).

The process of making batik is also an art in itself that requires high skill and patience (Athariq *et al.*, 2024). The dyeing techniques used in batik, especially written batik, require great precision because each line and dot must be carefully crafted using canting, a special tool for dripping hot night (wax) on the fabric. Each stage in this process has a philosophical value, from the selection of colors to the work of patterns, which depicts the local people's outlook on life. The natural colors used in traditional batik, for example, not only create visual beauty, but also symbolize harmony with nature and respect for the environment. More than just a patterned fabric, batik is now an internationally recognized symbol of national pride, especially after UNESCO designated it as an Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009. This recognition encourages the awakening of public interest in batik, both as a fashion product and as part of cultural fabrics but is also adapted into various modern products such as clothing, accessories, and home décor. Thus, batik not only continues to live and develop in the country, but also becomes an icon that makes Indonesia proud in the eyes of the world.

Batik, which was originally used only in formal and traditional events, has now transformed into a modern fashion element that is used in a variety of contexts, from casual wear to accessories and other designer products. Batik is able to adapt to the times and remain relevant in the midst of globalization, while maintaining the cultural values contained in it (Saputra., 2024). In addition, batik also plays a role as a tool of Indonesian cultural diplomacy on the international stage, used by diplomats and public figures as a symbol of national pride and cultural identity. This research can explore how batik functions as a symbol of nationalism that connects people with their cultural roots, as well as how the younger generation responds to batik design innovations in daily life, making it relevant both domestically and internationally.

Understanding and appreciation of batik needs to continue to be improved, especially among the younger generation (Evno *et al.*, 2024). Through education and innovation, batik art can remain relevant and continue to develop in accordance with the times without losing its traditional values. The preservation of batik as a cultural heritage is not only the task of the current generation, but also a mandate for the future, so that the beauty, philosophy, and noble values contained in each piece of batik fabric can continue to be preserved and inherited to the next generation.

The Indonesian batik industry faces major challenges, especially with competition from cheaper manufacturer textile products (Sari., 2019). However, batik still has a special place in the hearts of the people. Batik is not just a patterned fabric; It is a noble heritage that is rich in philosophical values, local wisdom, and the spirit of nationalism. Every time people wear batik, they revive the culture of their ancestors, reminding them of the beauty, diversity, and richness of the archipelago's traditions (Sofyani., 2017). Preserving batik is an effort to maintain the nation's identity so that our culture remains alive and can be passed on to future generations in the midst of changing times. Many of the things in batik are not just decorations or clothes that are worn; it is a symbol of pride, a form of love for the homeland, and proof that Indonesia is rich in priceless culture. National Batik Day is not just an annual celebration, but a momentum

to continue to maintain, develop, and introduce batik to the world, so that Indonesia's cultural wealth remains sustainable and known as a world heritage (Untari *et al.*, 2024).

Batik has undergone a significant transformation both in its form and function. In the past, batik was better known as traditional clothing that was only used in formal or traditional events, but now batik has become part of the modern lifestyle. Batik comes in a variety of products, from casual clothing to accessories such as bags, shoes, and jewelry. In addition, batik is also used in home decoration, such as curtains, tablecloths, and pillowcases, which further enriches interior design. The role of the fashion and creative design industry is very important in adapting batik into products that are more in line with the needs of contemporary society, so that batik remains in demand by the younger generation who are open to innovation. Batik transformation does not only occur in the form of products, but also involves significant changes in its production techniques (Nasrullah., 2022). With the advancement of technology, batik can now be made by stamping and printing methods, which allows for mass production at a more affordable cost and more efficient time. These techniques make batik more accessible to various groups, including the global market, and provide opportunities for small and mediumsized entrepreneurs to participate in the batik industry. The stamping and printing method, although it makes production easier, produces batik with more uniform patterns and less distinctive personal nuances (Ikhwanul., 2018). Therefore, it is important to maintain and appreciate written batik, which has high artistic value and authenticity.

The preservation of written batik is a task that not only depends on craftsmen, but also on the role of the government and society. Batik artisans play a key role in preserving traditional techniques that have been passed down from generation to generation, but they need support in the form of training, access to markets, and appreciation for their skills. The government, on the other hand, needs to provide facilities that support the preservation of written batik, such as certification and marketing programs, as well as involve the education sector to introduce batik techniques to the younger generation. The community also has an important role in appreciating and buying written batik, so that craftsmen can continue to survive and develop. By maintaining a balance between innovation and preservation of traditional techniques, Indonesian batik can still maintain the identity and cultural values that have been attached to it, while developing according to the demands of the times. This batik transformation enriches the fashion world and has a positive impact on Indonesia's creative economy. Design innovations that combine batik with modern materials and techniques make batik now available

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Batik plays an important role as an effective tool of cultural diplomacy, introducing the richness of Indonesian art and tradition and strengthening relations between nations. At the international level, batik is often used by Indonesian public figures and diplomats on various official occasions, such as diplomatic meetings, international forums, and state events. The use of batik in these events has more meaning than just a choice of clothing. Batik is a symbol of national pride that shows the world that Indonesia is a country rich in culture, tradition, and noble values. Through the use of batik in a diplomatic context, Indonesia can introduce and promote this rich cultural heritage to the international community.

Batik also functions as a symbol of the unity and diversity of the Indonesian nation. Each batik motif and pattern depicts deep values such as unity, harmony, and local wisdom that reflect the diversity of Indonesian culture. The use of batik in international meetings further strengthens the message that Indonesia's cultural diversity is not a barrier, but a force that enriches the nation's identity. Batik, with all its beauty and meaning, connects the Indonesian people with their cultural roots and at the same time becomes a symbol of nationalism that can be appreciated globally. Batik not only serves as a cultural identity, but also as an effective diplomatic tool to introduce Indonesia on the world stage, creating a deeper understanding of the nation's diversity and cultural richness.

The transformation of batik from a traditional symbol to a modern element actually enriches its value and meaning as a symbol of Indonesian nationalism. This change makes batik more inclusive, able to reach various groups, especially the younger generation who are open to innovation and change. Batik, which used to be only synonymous with formal clothing or traditional events, now comes in various forms that are more practical and in accordance with modern trends, such as casual fashion, accessories, and other fashion products. Batik still retains its essence as a symbol of national pride that connects the Indonesian people with their cultural roots. This makes batik remain relevant in the midst of modernization and global cultural currents that continue to develop. The challenges of globalization and the entry of foreign cultures do not reduce the position of batik as a symbol of Indonesian nationalism and cultural identity. Preservation and innovation in batik-making techniques are the key to ensuring that this cultural heritage remains alive and thriving (Hakim., 2018). The government, craftsmen, and the community play an important role in maintaining the authenticity of batik while developing various new forms that are in accordance with the times. This preservation effort is expected to make batik an inseparable part of the identity of the Indonesian nation, as well as strengthen Indonesia's position in the international arena as a country that is not only economically and politically empowered, but also appreciated for its rich and global cultural heritage.

The dynamics of batik in international cultural diplomacy offers opportunities for in-depth research on the role of batik as a strategic cultural communication tool. Although batik is often used by Indonesian diplomats and public figures in official events as a symbol of national pride, more in-depth research on the concrete impact of the use of batik in international relations is limited. Further research is needed to analyze how batik, in addition to functioning as a cultural identity, can also play a greater role in introducing Indonesia's cultural wealth to the international world. The use of batik in state events, international forums, or cultural exhibitions can be studied to see if this is able to strengthen Indonesia's image as a country rich in cultural heritage, as well as modern and innovative.

This research can also explore how batik can increase global understanding of Indonesia's cultural diversity and strengthen diplomatic relations with other countries. By identifying whether the use of batik in cultural diplomacy can shape a more positive perception of Indonesia abroad, this study will provide insight into its impact in the fields of art, design, and tourism. Further assessments can be carried out to measure how effectively batik is used as a tool of diplomacy in establishing cultural and economic cooperation between countries, as well as its role in promoting peace and mutual understanding between nations. A strategic approach in using batik as a tool of cultural diplomacy can strengthen Indonesia's position on the international stage and make it a symbol of unity and appreciation for the world's cultural diversity.

METHODOLOGY

This method involves an in-depth study of literature sources, such as books, journal articles, research reports, and relevant online sources. The literature review aims to understand the concepts and philosophical values behind batik motifs, the history of batik development in various regions in Indonesia, and the role of batik as a symbol of cultural identity that is increasingly known to the world. This research also utilizes literature studies to explore aspects of international recognition of batik, especially after it has been designated by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. This literature study is used to develop a strong theoretical framework in analyzing the transformation of batik and how batik develops along with social and cultural changes. In addition, this study examines the literature that discusses the challenges faced in maintaining the authenticity of batik, such as competition with mass products, technological advancements, and the role of globalization that affects the aesthetics and production process of batik. The analysis of these various literature is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the position of batik as a symbol of nationalism and the importance of preserving batik as a national identity in the midst of modernization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strengthening national identity, especially in the context of multicultural education, can begin by instilling a sense of love for the homeland in each individual, especially through the educational environment (Hakim., 2023). This environment plays an important role as a forum to shape students' character and mindset (Hadian *et al.*, 2022). In this case, various aspects of local culture that are part of the nation's identity need to be introduced. One of the concrete steps that can be taken is to make the use of regional languages, which are an important part of Indonesia's cultural heritage, and

encourage students to wear traditional clothes or regional batik on certain days. This step not only fosters a sense of pride in one's own culture, but also strengthens national identity among the younger generation. The educational environment can also provide special spaces or activities that focus on introducing regional culture, such as holding art performances, exhibitions, or discussions about local history and cultural values (Resmawati & Alrianingrum., 2024). This kind of activity can help students explore and appreciate the cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia. The effort aims to increase cultural knowledge while fostering mutual respect between students, so that it becomes a place that not only educates in academic aspects, but also shapes the character of students as a generation that loves and maintains cultural wealth and national identity.

This multicultural education effort should also be able to adapt to the rapid development of information technology and the increasingly unstoppable flow of globalization. In this context, the use of technology as a medium to introduce Indonesian culture to the outside world is very relevant. The creation of creative content that focuses on Indonesia's cultural richness, such as videos, articles, and social media, can be an effective means to educate the global community about the traditions, arts, and cultural values of this nation. In addition, by integrating technology in learning, the younger generation will be more connected to their own culture and can share with the outside world.

However, in the midst of the rapid influence of foreign cultures coming in, we need to make selections and adjustments to ensure that the foreign cultures that enter can be filtered wisely. This process aims to achieve glocalization, which is an effort to adapt to global culture while maintaining local values and identity. In this way, the Indonesian nation can respond to global changes without losing its cultural roots. In the end, a nation that can combine technological advances and globalization with respect for its identity is a nation that will be respected and recognized internationally. As a developed nation, we must make optimal use of the flow of globalization, so that we can achieve various positive impacts that support social, economic, and cultural progress, without sacrificing the uniqueness and self-esteem of the nation.

Basically, defining the concept of multicultural education in Indonesia is not an easy thing. While the implications of this education are far-reaching and important for creating a more tolerant and respectful society, the challenges remain enormous. One of the main challenges is the attitude of the community who still find it difficult to accept the presence of foreigners with diverse cultural backgrounds. Indonesian society, despite being known for its diversity, often feels threatened by incoming outside cultures, especially if those cultures are perceived as contrary to local values that have long been upheld. In this context, Pancasila as the basis of the state has a very important role. Pancasila is not only a guideline for the life of the nation and state, but also provides direction in responding to local wisdom and maintaining Indonesian cultural values in the midst of the rapid flow of globalization. However, there are fundamental obstacles in the implementation stage of multicultural education that need to be respected. One of them is the difficulty in balancing the preservation of local culture with the entry of foreign cultures which are increasingly dominating through media and technology. The global cultural currents that are so deeply rooted in people's thinking are now very difficult to stop or reject, so it requires a wise approach. The biggest challenge faced is how to create a society with a high lifestyle, but still maintain the nation's cultural identity. Therefore, it is important for us to take advantage of globalization in a positive and selective way. Globalization should not only be seen as a threat, but also as an opportunity to enrich our

culture, as long as we are able to filter out values that are in accordance with the nation's identity. This requires the ability to think critically and act wisely, so that we can adapt to progress without losing our cultural roots. Thus, globalization can provide great benefits, such as introducing Indonesian culture to the world, while still maintaining the uniqueness and richness of the existing culture.

National identity is a reflection of a nation's identity, which reflects the peculiarities and characteristics possessed in the eyes of the world. This identity includes various elements that make up the nation, such as mindsets, cultures, ethnicities, and religions spread throughout Indonesia. National identity is also closely related to multicultural education, which is one of the original assets of the Indonesian nation that needs to be maintained and preserved. Cultural diversity originating from various ethnic groups in Indonesia must be maintained as part of the proud national identity. Indonesia, with all its ethnic and cultural diversity, has an obligation to maintain and play an active role in maintaining national identity. This effort must continue to be carried out by all elements of the nation, not only by the government, so that the values contained in the national identity remain sustainable. Each individual also has the responsibility to maintain his or her behavior and actions to reflect the noble values that are part of the nation's identity. Thus, the existing diversity can be a force that supports the unity and progress of the Indonesian nation.

Batik is one of Indonesia's cultural heritages that has high aesthetic value and deep symbolism. In the beginning, batik was used as a traditional clothing in a limited circle, especially by the royal community and the aristocracy. Each batik motif has a deep philosophical meaning, reflecting the social status, position, and relationship between humans and nature and God. Certain motifs and colors are used to indicate the identity and prestige of the wearer. Over time, batik began to be accepted by the wider community, not only limited to the elite, and transformed into an important part of daily life. Batik now comes in various forms, from formal and casual clothing, to accessories and designer products, which enriches its role in modern society.

Batik has developed into a symbol of Indonesia's national pride, reflecting the cultural diversity and identity of the nation (Indrawati & Sari., 2024). The international recognition of batik by UNESCO in 2009 further strengthens its status as an intangible cultural heritage that must be preserved. Batik is now not only part of history, but also a tool to promote Indonesia's image in the international arena. In this context, batik describes Indonesia's ability to maintain and develop rich cultural traditions, while still adapting to the times. Batik plays an important role in strengthening the sense of nationalism and collective identity of the Indonesian people, as well as introducing the beauty and diversity of Indonesian culture to the world (Tandjung., 2017).

At first, batik was only used by a limited group in Indonesia, such as the nobility and the royal family. Each batik motif used has a deep symbolic meaning, reflects the social status of the wearer, and describes its position in society. In addition, certain motifs and colors are often associated with philosophical values related to nature and life. Batik is a symbol of cultural subtlety, social sophistication, and closeness to spiritual power. The use of batik at that time not only functioned as clothing, but also as a symbol of identity and honor for the wearer. However, during the colonial period, batik experienced a significant decline in popularity due to the influence of foreign cultures, especially the entry of imported textiles from Europe and the introduction of more efficient modern fabric production techniques. The Dutch colonial government sought to replace the use of batik with Western clothing as a symbol of modernity, while encouraging changes in the social and cultural structure of Indonesian society. Nevertheless, batik is still maintained among indigenous peoples and local communities as a cultural heritage. In the midst of the flow of foreign influences, batik remains appreciated and preserved, serving as a symbol of a strong cultural identity and a means to maintain tradition in the face of changing times.

The rise of batik as a symbol of Indonesian nationalism began to be seen in the early 20th century, along with the emergence of nationalism movements that sought to revive local cultural values that had been marginalized due to colonial domination. During this period, batik was not only used in the context of customs, but began to be adopted by various circles of society as a form of resistance to foreign cultural hegemony applied by the colonial government. Batik is a symbol of pride and national identity that wants to maintain its identity in the midst of the pressure of Western culture that continues to develop, both in aspects of daily life and in government (Aragon., 2022).

During the independence struggle, batik became a symbol of Indonesia's unity and diversity, connecting various tribes, religions, and cultures throughout the archipelago (Varanida., 2016). Batik, with various motifs and patterns, began to be used by independence movement activists and the wider community as a form of national solidarity and strengthening the identity of the independent Indonesian nation. Batik is no longer considered a traditional garment with limited use, but has evolved into a symbol of Indonesia's struggle, pride, and cultural strength that responds to the pressures of modernity and foreign influences. Through the use of batik, the Indonesian people show their determination to preserve their cultural heritage while affirming their existence and pride in their existing cultural roots, even in the context of the struggle for independence.

Batik, as Indonesia's cultural heritage, has undergone a significant transformation, making it not just a traditional garment, but a symbol of national pride and national identity (Samuel *et al.*, 2022). Since being recognized by UNESCO in 2009 as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, batik has not only been seen as a patterned fabric, but also as a symbol of Indonesia's cultural diversity. Each batik motif represents the cultural richness owned by various regions in Indonesia, with different characteristics and philosophies in each region. Yogyakarta and Solo batik, for example, are known for their delicate and meaningful designs, while Pekalongan batik comes in vibrant bright colors. This change shows that batik has functioned more than just clothing, but also as a close link between Indonesian people and their cultural values and history.

Batik is now widely accepted as a symbol of nationalism, used in various state events and cultural activities (Nugroho *et al.*, 2021). Batik is used not only in formal events, but also in daily life by people from various circles, both state officials and ordinary people. This makes batik a symbol that unites various ethnic, religious, and cultural groups in Indonesia. Its use in Independence Day celebrations and international events further strengthens its position as a symbol of national unity. On the international stage, batik has been known as a unique Indonesian cultural product. Indonesian designers are increasingly creative in combining batik with modern design, making batik relevant in the global market without sacrificing its traditional richness (Xiao., 2024).

The main challenge in the revival of batik as a national symbol is to maintain its authenticity and quality. The increasing popularity of batik has had the impact of the emergence of mass batik products that do not use techniques and materials that are in accordance with the original batik. Therefore, it is important for the batik industry to maintain quality and maintain traditional techniques in the batik manufacturing process (Karlina *et al.*, 2024). The government and the community must also play an active role

in ensuring that batik is still seen as a high-value cultural symbol, not just a commercial product (Nabillah *et al.*, 2024). The preservation of batik can be achieved through education and training that teaches traditional batik skills to the younger generation, so that this cultural heritage does not become extinct.

The Indonesian government has launched various initiatives to support the development of batik, both domestically and abroad (Steelyana., 2022). Through batik promotion and exhibition, the government seeks to introduce batik as a special Indonesian cultural product to the international market. In addition, training programs for batik artisans are very important to preserve batik skills and ensure the sustainability of the batik industry in Indonesia. The economic empowerment program for batik artisans can also strengthen the position of batik as one of Indonesia's leading commodities, which is able to compete in the global market.

Batik has a positive impact on the Indonesian economy, especially for batik artisans in the producing areas (Subhan., 2022). The increasing demand for batik, both in the domestic and international markets, creates economic opportunities for the surrounding community. The batik industry can create new jobs and help improve the local economy, especially in batik center areas. The development of batik as a creative industry will strengthen the Indonesian economy while preserving the cultural values contained in every piece of batik fabric. However, it is important to ensure that batik is not only seen as a fashion product, but is still understood as a cultural symbol that has a deep meaning. Batik must be appreciated as part of the history and struggle of the Indonesian nation, not just a commercial item. Innovation in the design and utilization of batik is needed to ensure that batik remains relevant in the modern era, but without compromising the values contained in tradition. Batik must be able to adapt to the changing times, but still maintain the authenticity and cultural essence in it.

Batik also has an important role in building a sense of pride among the younger generation. The increasingly widespread use of batik among young people shows that batik has become part of a more modern lifestyle. Through the daily use of batik, the younger generation learns to appreciate and preserve their culture. Education about batik, both in terms of history and the cultural values contained in it, is very important to be introduced from an early age, so that the next generation has a deeper understanding of the importance of preserving this cultural heritage. Along with sustainable preservation and development efforts, batik will remain a strong symbol of Indonesia's cultural identity (Farida., 2017). Through design innovation and the creative use of batik, batik can continue to develop and remain relevant in various aspects of modern life. In addition, batik can also introduce Indonesian culture to the international world as a product that has artistic value and deep philosophical meaning. Thus, batik will remain an inseparable part of the Indonesian national identity that is valued and appreciated around the world (Nursanty & Susilowati., 2021).

Overall, the transformation of batik into a symbol of nationalism and identity of the Indonesian nation reflects the cultural wealth in this country. Batik is not just a garment, but also a symbol of unity and pride that connects various ethnic and cultural groups in Indonesia. With its continuous preservation and innovative development, batik will continue to play an important role in strengthening Indonesia's cultural identity, as well as introducing this cultural wealth to the international world.

CONCLUSION

Batik has developed into a symbol of nationalism and identity of the Indonesian nation, reflecting the cultural diversity that exists throughout the archipelago. Each batik motif, which is typical of different regions, contains deep philosophical and historical value. The use of batik, which is increasingly widespread both in state events and daily life, strengthens its position as a symbol of national unity. In addition, batik has gained global recognition after being recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, which further emphasizes its role as a symbol of national pride. With this recognition, batik has not only become part of local culture but also an icon of Indonesian culture in the international world. It is important to maintain the authenticity and quality of batik so that it remains relevant in the midst of the increasingly massive development of the fashion industry. Efforts to preserve batik can be carried out through education, batik skills training, and sustainable promotion in the international market. Batik also makes a significant contribution to the Indonesian economy, especially for craftsmen and the creative industry. There are innovations in batik design and manufacturing techniques that still prioritize traditional values, batik can survive in the midst of the modern era. Therefore, batik will continue to play an important role in strengthening the nation's identity and become a symbol of pride that is appreciated both domestically and internationally.

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