Rebranding of Malangan Batik as a Symbol of Malang’s Cultural Identity through Value Chain Analysis

Priskardus Hermanto Candra1*, Anindya Widita2, Faishal Hilmy Maulida2, Mardhatilah Shanti3, and Yoseph Benny Kusuma3

1Character Building Development Center, School of Design, Interior Design Departement, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia, 11480
2Public Relations Department, Faculty of Digital Communication and Hotel & Tourism, Bina Nusantara University, Jakarta, Indonesia, 11480.
3Entrepreneurship Department. BINUS Business School Undergraduate Program. Bina Nusantara University. Jakarta, Indonesia 11480

Abstract. Malangan Batik is one of the symbol of Malang's cultural identity. As an identity’s symbol that has been inherited, Malangan batik must be able to compete and reach consumers on a wider scale. However, Malangan batik is in fact not much in demand by consumers, even the younger generation in Malang. Through the analysis of value chain, production, distribution and consumption, Malangan Batik is seen on a wider scale that the lack of interest in Malangan batik is caused by internal and external factors. Malangan batik rebranding is carried out by improving marketing, technology, services, logistics and human resources. This study uses a qualitative method where the research was conducted with in-depth interviews with Malangan batik business as SMEs. The results of this study prove that batik will be an appropriate means of cultural promotion and will reach a wider marketing scope if the distribution and marketing production methods are adjusted to the development of consumer trends in a certain era. Malangan batik business must be able to answer consumer needs without losing the substance of the meaning contained in it. Batik must be able to elaborate new motifs and technologies in accelerating and increasing production.

1 Introduction

Batik is one of the cultural heritages of Indonesia, which is already recognized globally. Universal acknowledgment of the heritage was marked by UNESCO’s decision on October 2, 2009, which established batik as Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. There are various patterns with their respective meanings and the variety spreads in multiple regions of Indonesia, including Malangan Batik, originated from Malang, East Java. Malangan batik as a batik motif was derived from the history, culture, philosophy and life of the Malang citizens to distinguish it from other regions’ batik patterns in Indonesia. The Malangan batik generally displays the uniqueness of the Malang area, namely the locals and the nature. Most of the motifs found are of nature elements that symbolize fertility and prosperity, for example the motif of Celaket, Kembang Jeruk, Kembang Juwet, Singo Lotus, Kembang Kopi, Dele Kecker, Celaket, Kucecwara and Kembang Pring, which are related to flowers.

Compared to batik from other regions such as Solo and Jogja, Malangan batik is yet to be widely known, even though the aesthetic value of Malangan batik is no less interesting than batik from other regions in Indonesia [1]. The study of Elviera et al. found that regional identity in various Malangan batik motifs greatly influences consumer purchasing decision [2]. Romy Setiawan[3] and Pradikta [4] aimed to provide an alternative through their innovation in order to elevate the historical value of Malang as well as the region’s branding through batik motifs named Kinari-Kinara and Dwarapala. These motifs come from the reliefs of the Badut Temple, which is a heritage of the Singhasari Kingdom in Malang. Udianty and Sunarya offered branding as a strategy to build more attraction for Malangan batik through revitalization and the autumics method, which hopefully would make batik be more favored by the younger generation [5].

Another common problem faced by the industry is the lack of a quality management system, which consists of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling (POAC). Furthermore, the lack of fund support for entrepreneurship, traditional marketing (no website, social media or marketplace used), and the lack of consistent financial management and report were also considered as obstacles in developing the industry of Malangan batik [6]. Limanno's study which started from Komarudin Kudiya's success in promoting Indonesian Batik as a cultural heritage started from three important elements, namely human resources, nature conditions

* Corresponding author: priskardus.candra@binus.ac.id
and the dyes used in batik products. Even though other elements may also contribute to the batik creation and evolution, the characteristics of Indonesian batik mainly emerge through these three categories [7]. It means that Batik would always be known as the cultural heritage of the Indonesian nation no matter in which form or type of product.

The innovations developed by the previous researchers departed from the reality that Malangan batik has yet to be the top-of-mind batik product in the consumer’s mind. Batik as a local wisdom that symbolizes cultural identity certainly needs to always exist and be loved by all generations amidst the abundance of modern culture and increasingly advanced technology. Therefore, a value chain analysis is offered as a starting point in mapping policies and innovations in Malangan batik production to support the rebranding effort of Malangan batik. With the strategy, the existence of Malangan batik as the identity of Malang city can be further established and known. The rebranding through value chain analysis touches on the historical dimension, the economic dimension, and the social dimension of Malangan batik. As a result, the awareness of the existence of Malangan batik and its specialty would increase.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Culture Identity

This study used the notion of cultural identity according to Mary Jane Collier [8]. Collier opens the discourse on cultural identity from the notion of culture as a system of symbols, meanings, and norms that are passed on or inherited historically. A culture has three interrelated components, namely symbols, norms, and history. Cultural identity occurs when a group creates meaning in a symbolic system of life. This system of symbols and meanings is passed down from history and passed on from generation to generation. The concept of cultural identity by Hall is seen as a dynamic process as well as a static process. As a dynamic process, cultural identity in finding its form never ends because the formation of that identity is always present in the cultural and historical context of a particular society. There are several conditions that make the process of forming cultural identity run dynamically, namely the way people place themselves as subjects of history, culture and power that always influence [9]. On the other side, cultural identity is also a static condition when the identity is seen as a signifier or marker for a group of people who share the same culture and historical background.

In the context of Malangan batik, the motifs created along with the meanings contained in them contain values that are unique and become part of life of the residents of Malang. Although historically it is uncertain when Malangan Batik was first discovered, Malangan batik has existed since the days of the Singhasari and Kanjurutahan Kingdoms with plant and flower motifs that are typical of the Malang area. In the later era, especially in the 19th century, Malangan batik developed more through the emergence of other motifs such as monuments, lion's mane or tassel, as well as lotus flower. The contemporary patterns of Malangan batik motifs are the Malangan monument, Malangan masks, and/or Malang heritage which better represent the identity and characteristic of Malang and its surroundings. Figure 1, depicted below, illustrates the presence of the Malang mask motif and heritage motive within the context of Malangan batik. Thus, as a symbol of identity, motifs and patterns on Malangan batik does not only contain local wisdom that is embedded in the people and environment of Malang, but also an accommodation of other symbols that develop with the dynamics of Malang people's life and the progression of time.

![Fig. 1. Malangan Mask and Heritage Motive in Malangan Batik](image)

2.2 Value Chain Analysis

Value chain is one of the analytical tools to identify the strategies and policies taken by a company or an organization to provide necessary products and services to customers and to be competitive in the industry [10]. Value chain analysis helps companies in making the right policies and designing innovative steps to improve production, distribution, and marketing to be able to compete with similar products from the competitors. Kaplinsky and Moris provide a broader definition in the context of rapid technological developments related to value chains. Value chain does not focus only on local economic activities (production, distribution, and consumption), but also covers the company's global market activities of as a consequence of technological and market developments [11]. Porter emphasized the two main activities that must be carried out in making a value chain analysis, the main activities and support activities. The main activities are all forms of activities that also affect physical product creation, marketing, and after-sales actions. The categories include operations or production, inbound logistics, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, and other services. While the secondary activities are all activities that support the main activities in the company, which include procurement activities, technology development, human resource management, and infrastructure. As seen in Figure 2.
that determines the production of Malangan batik is on the fabric used. Another consumable raw material the quality level of Malangan batik produced depends the process of drawing the batik motifs. In other words, craftsmen, these three aspects of mori would determine density, and the type of yarn used. For Malangan batik according to the fabric type. High-priced mori cloth the needs of SMEs. The prices of the cloth vary from organization partners which consistently supply Malangan Batik craft centers, the mori cloth is sourced textile factory in Malang or Surabaya. In several Malangan Batik craft centers, the mori cloth is sourced from organization partners which consistently supply the needs of SMEs. The prices of the cloth vary according to the fabric type. High-priced mori cloth usually has higher quality in terms of thickness, yarn density, and the type of yarn used. For Malangan batik craftsmen, these three aspects of mori would determine the process of drawing the batik motifs. In other words, the quality level of Malangan batik produced depends on the fabric used. Another consumable raw material that determines the production of Malangan batik is ‘malam’ or wax. Malam is a waxy substance in the batik-making process that serves to cover certain parts of batik that have been drawn so that they are not exposed to color. Thus, the batik pattern is maintained and not blocked or concealed by the dyes. In batik tulis, which is handmade by hand through handwritten technique, the wax is an essential element. It is supplied by the partner companies and trusted small business distributors from Solo. The wax supply generally would last for a month. The availability of wax production of batik greatly determines the traffic of production and distribution. When there is sufficient supply of wax, it will accommodate more production of batik. Meanwhile the availability of dyes as raw materials is determined by the batik motifs favored by consumers. For instance, when consumers prefer certain motif and colors that are currently on trend, it would require certain color dyes to be supplied for the production. In addition to that, according to respondents from Small Medium Entrepreneurs (SMEs) Batik Blimbing, the diverse and visually attractive patterns also determine the amount of availability of supporting raw materials. In written batik motifs, stamped batik or painted batik with contemporary decorations, which require the use of varied colors also becomes another factor that determines the availability of dye raw materials.

3 Method

This study aimed to analyze the chain of production, distribution, and marketing of Malangan batik to further suggest the most suitable strategies to implement to successfully rebranding Malangan batik as a symbol of Malang’s identity. The qualitative approach was used to collect and analyzed the data. The informants for this study were the Malangan Batik activists (SMEs, batik galleries, home batik industries) and Malang’s cultural observers. They were chosen with the consideration of having the necessary knowledge and experience with the Malang batik industry, as well as the Malang culture development. The primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews while the secondary data were collected through previous research on Nusantara batik to gain more general information and Malang batik as a focus on the study, as well as resources related to value chain analysis. Supporting data were also collected through observation and documentation studies. The data were processed and triangulated to ensure validity and credibility.

4 Results

4.1 Inbound and Outbound Logistic

Inbound logistic activities relate to how organizations manage the traffic of raw materials for Malangan batik making. In this sense, inbound logistics ensures that the supply chain of the raw materials for the production would be available as needed to support the production process of batik. Malangan Batik industry usually obtains raw materials from various places such as Solo, Malang or Surabaya. The main ingredients that must be available are cloth and dyes (napthol). The fabric used is mori/special fabric for batik, produced by a local textile factory in Malang or Surabaya. In several Malangan Batik craft centers, the mori cloth is sourced from organization partners which consistently supply the needs of SMEs. The prices of the cloth vary according to the fabric type. High-priced mori cloth usually has higher quality in terms of thickness, yarn density, and the type of yarn used. For Malangan batik craftsmen, these three aspects of mori would determine the process of drawing the batik motifs. In other words, the quality level of Malangan batik produced depends on the fabric used. Another consumable raw material that determines the production of Malangan batik is ‘malam’ or wax. Malam is a waxy substance in the

4.2 Marketing

Marketing is essential for Malangan Batik craft to gain exposure and revenue. Marketing strategy that covers all target markets can support the sustainability of production and distribution as well as the process of introducing the uniqueness and cultural identity represented through batik motifs for wider audiences. Currently, the media used in promoting Malangan Batik are digital platforms of social media including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. Website is also used by some SMEs but it is not the main platform for promotion. The choice of media has considered the effectiveness in conveying the brand messages and promoting Malangan batik products. However, the traditional or offline media were said to also contribute to getting the word out there about the product. Malangan batik craftsmen informed that advertising through local radio and television also helped in product promotion other than the social media promotion. Even though it is not as impactful and continuous, local television and radio have become information channels for batik consumers in local or national events such as commemorating independence, cultural month, and cultural festivals. Promotions are also carried out through newspapers, posters and advertisements which are made independently by each SMEs. However, not all SMEs can create similar promotional content due to limited resources.

SMES Batik Malang also received guidance and assistance from the local government to support the promotion strategy. The government, through Dinas Koperasi, Usaha Kecil dan Menengah (the organization to support small medium enterprises) helps conduct promotions for Malangan batik both online and offline. The local government through the national and regional craft councils (Dekranasda) provides opportunities for
Malangan batik products to be displayed at government events and provides a marketplace for batik products both online and offline to accommodate promotion.

In terms of promotion and marketing, Batik Malangan craftsmen realize that promotion through social media is a very vital part, especially during the pandemic. Batik SMEs have tried to manage social media account to market their products, especially to the younger generation who are actively using social media. In terms of trends in motifs and styles, some of the Malangan batik craftsmen refuse to explore new motifs to suit market tastes, especially the younger generation, most likely because they prefer to uphold the authentic motif and maintain the original character. Nevertheless, they still believe through social media promotion, which is effective and cost-saving, their products can attract more consumers. Since Batik products, including Malangan batik exist among the ever-changing clothing and fashion industry, it needs to be able to compete and win the hearts of consumers. Therefore, it is important that SMEs can continuously put up initiatives and innovations to elevate the brand of Malangan batik and create suitable marketing content through social media to increase exposure and hopefully acquire and maintain more customers in the long run. Figure 3 illustrates the aforementioned information.

![Fig. 3. Tugu and Singa Motive of Malangan Batik](image)

### 4.3 Services

Service in Malangan Batik products is related to how the customers feel during and after the interaction with the product. It includes customer satisfaction and perception of range and quality of batik from the use value. Additionally, it also involves improving the product and quality of Batik to cater to customers on a wider scale. Innovation in customer service has always been a concern for Malangan batik craftsmen. For Malangan batik industry, the service revolves on the knowledge and skills of the craftsmen to create customer satisfaction. For that purpose, Malangan batik SMEs receive support from the local government and educational institutions or campuses in the form of soft skills training to improve service quality.

Malangan batik craftsmen also market their products directly to consumers using several galleries to display Malangan batik products. The owner of Batik Blimbing shared that batik marketing utilizes storytelling as the main strength, which is an interesting element since it can be a way to brand the product through a story. Therefore, the Batik narrative must be mastered by the staff or frontline workers in each gallery to influence consumers to buy after knowing the story behind the batik creation. It is agreed that employees in the production unit must be properly trained to be able to provide desirable and friendly services to consumers.

SMEs Batik Malangan D’Smar, Soendari Batik choose to make the Malangan mask motif as the main, first-rate product marketed in galleries and wholesale through partner stores. Just like other batik SMEs choosing to market batik wholesale, the focus of Batik craftsmen is the supply chain availability to market demand which does not only reach Malang or East Java but also other regions in Indonesia and even abroad. Batik Blimbing has exported their products such as clothing, sandals, and bags to several countries such as America, England, Thailand, Japan, China, Singapore, and Finland. The distribution network has been maintained by Malangan batik SMEs to sustain the partnership and the batik products will be more widely known. Respondents from Soendari batik admitted that as an Indonesian and especially as a resident of Malang, they feel their own satisfaction when Malangan Batik spread its wings worldwide and foreigners known about its existence. As an extension of that, Malang region, with its rich cultural identity is also known. The business owners also hope more consumers including tourists visiting Malang can learn something new through Malangan batik and at the same time help contributing to the economy of Malang through buying and using their products.

Services are also related to the maintenance of production resources that support batik production. Maintenance of production equipment is carried out regularly to ensure quality production that is according to standard. On average, each SMEs performs minor maintenance on production support facilities once a month, but a thorough inspection is done once every six months to ensure that the production equipment can function optimally.

### 4.4 Human Resources

Human resources are one of the key elements in the production and distribution process of Malangan batik products since each product involves handiwork. In production process, Malangan batik is produced by small and medium enterprises spread across Malang area with their respective characteristics. The average age range of the workers is 50-60 years old. The main reason for the age group to craft batik is due to the nature of work itself, that is making batik can be done from home or in a place nearby from home. In addition to that, it is also because of the love for Malang culture that can be realized and expressed through their touch by drawing or making batik products themselves. All informants shared the same agreement that the feeling of love and belonging to Malang culture brought them to their craft of Malangan batik.

From the organization’s perspective, the hiring of workers of non-productive working age is driven by a fundamental reason, which is maintaining the typical Malangan Batik style that has been practiced through generations. In other words, not all workers understand the Malangan batik philosophy, which will be pictured and drawn on batik products, hence the preference on acquired knowledge and experience of more senior
workers in handling the crafting. In addition to knowledge of the philosophy behind Batik motifs, trained and skilled hands are also significant to produce the quality product that can properly display Malangan Batik. The reality is that those workers of non-productive age are still the most competent to handle the craft to date.

That phenomenon has a consequence, which is known as 'generation break' for the successors of Malangan batik. The lack of regeneration of batik crafters has caused the cultural values and identity of Malangan's local wisdom failed to be conveyed properly to the next generation. The owners of batik SMEs stated that the majority of Malangan batik craftsmen are women and there has been difficulties in passing the torch of painting batik motifs to the next generation. The problem is yet to be solved. However, consistent sharing knowledge and training assistance to the younger, potential Malangan batik artists with talent and skill could be one of the possible solutions to help bridge the skill gap among generations.

Related to the batik motif, there are equipment for stamped batik or batik printing method, one which requires less handiwork from the crafters, as there is a supporting tool involved. Yet, the drawback of this type of batik motif is that it is a repetitive, consistent motif so that it may seem flat and boring [12]. Thus while technically the younger crafters could contribute more to this type of batik, the authentic skill of hand-drawing or hand-paint batik would not be obtained.

Another problem faced with the orthodox motif is the lack of motif’s variation that suits the style of the younger generation, which would lead to it being less favored by the younger generation with a contemporary lifestyle. On the contrary, Malangan batik craftsmen believed that Malangan batik should remain original to clearly represents the philosophy of Malangan society, culture, and customs. If an industry wants to keep up with the market and lifestyle development, it is necessary to be agile and adaptive to the development. However, it does not mean eliminating the original element in any way. The perspective that if one moves on from doing things ‘the old way’ means leaving the tradition behind may need to be adjusted especially because the market shifts due to how the way consumer’s preference shift.

The research of Udiangti and Udaya proved that the diversity of batik motifs is one way to attract the interest of the younger generation and it is possible to execute without leaving the local wisdom or the authenticity of batik. Besides that, the creative exploration of batik motifs may also include other Malangan's culture and identity that has not been exposed in the current or existing pattern [5]. Certainly, the form of innovation in batik products does not appear only in its motifs but also in terms of visuals, processes, materials, techniques, and functions [13]. For example, different color combination can give trendy visual which may suit more of the younger generation, and batik outerwear or accessories as compliment to the outfit would catch young people’s interest. The younger generation has a strong sense in good and attractive visuals, hence batik materials and style that can grab their attention, on top of being easy and comfortable to wear would help assure them to wear the product. From the manufacturer's perspective, the diversity of motifs and visuals is one of the efforts to capture market opportunities [14].

4.5 Technology

Technology in the Malangan batik industry is related to the use of machines and other supporting equipment to print batik motifs and support the production to be more effective and efficient. The common problem faced by all SMEs of Batik Malangan is the limited number of products being created at a certain time because the batik-making process is done manually by hand and with traditional equipment. In this context, the manual and traditional processes refer to the selection of fabric’s raw materials, making patterns, giving colors (dyeing), soaking, to drying. These days, the use of technology can be useful to expand the production and increase the production rate. The technological implementation can be observed in Figure 4 presented thereafter.

Different batik types have different production time, with the longest duration of time in the production process being the written batik’s, which takes about two or three months. When the industry implements the technologies such as electric canting (a spouted tool), electric stoves, stamping machines, and other production equipment, it will cut half of the time spent for manual production with simple technology. From the data gathered from representatives of Malangan batik industry, 88.9% is not assisted by technological equipment, while the other 11.1% is using a combination of traditional tool and technologies. However, it does not mean that those craftmen avoid the technology. The reason is the lack of resource to supply and incorporate the equipment. Moreover, another reason stated is because they feel that Malangan batik motifs are more complicated and require a specific aesthetic touch, which will be hard to replicate through modern technology to be able to better represent Malang's culture and identity.

Shaharuddin's study argued that the application of technology in today's batik production is not something that is done to eliminate authentic batik patterns and motifs, but it is necessary to maintain the rich heritage to survive in the modern era [15]. Batik as a heritage of cultural wealth and identity of the archipelago must be preserved. The combination of traditional batik methods and the use of technology must go hand in hand to create and preserve the authenticity while being able to stay flexible in the everchanging era. Technological innovation in batik production is the best way to increase productivity so that it can meet market needs and respond to consumer’s taste. Without eliminating the basic principle of a symbol of cultural identity, technology in batik can further expand production capacity. Additionally, with the increase capacity, the price will be kept affordable, therefore easily reach the market segments. That will lead to an increase of revenue when combined with integrated marketing effort through optimization of communication technology and online media.
While many are still persistent with handling Malangan batik the traditional way, the owner of the Blimbing Batik emphasized that the technology used in batik production has successfully increase productivity, yet it has been able to maintain the main, authentic crafting elements of batik done by hand, which include drawing patterns on paper, transferring patterns to the cloth or fabric, applying wax to the fabric, creating motifs, and coloring [16]. Currently, Batik Blimbing has developed patent motifs, namely the mask motif, the Malang monument motif, and the Malang Heritage motif (Warna Warni Village) from the combination of handiwork and technology.

The process of technological adaptation and optimization can be challenging, especially for industry which is tightly embedded with traditional element and identity. Getting the resources to learn to use and operate the technology for the manufacturing or production would also take time, especially for the home industry that is already short on resources. Nonetheless, technological support has become an essential element to help the industry and production be more efficient and bring more benefit to the business.

![Electric tools (canting) for drawing Malangan Batik](image)

**Fig. 4. Electric tools (canting) for drawing Malangan Batik**

### 5 Conclusion

The identity of a society will survive and be remembered if it is preserved well in artworks and culture. Malangan Batik is a masterpiece that must be preserved not only from it being a livelihood for the craftsmen, but it is also a symbol of identity of Malang culture. Through various batik products that is strategically marketed, the uniqueness and culture of Malangan would be spread and known by wider audience. In another word, Malangan batik can be said as a branding tool for Malang region. In addition to that, it is also a history marker and it symbolizes philosophy of life for the people of Malang which must be passed down from generation to generation. Malangan batik is a cultural treasure equivalent in value with batik from other regions in Indonesia.

To compete with other types and motifs of batik from other regions, it is necessary to evaluate the value chain and identify the components to focus on to help Malangan batik reaches its objective. The purpose of maximizing the value chain would help in increasing added value in the industry. To successfully improve in production value and optimize other components in the value chain, Malangan batik industry needs to pay attention not only in the main activities but also supporting activities. Production and marketing effort need to be supported by the technology to maintain effectivity and efficiency. However, human touches and capabilities will still greatly contribute to the innovation of patterns and styles, as well as to help convey the story to the audience through direct communication or through branding content in social media. Establishing Malangan batik as a symbol of cultural identity of Malang should start with the awareness of each craftsmen and SMEs owner on finding the best way to highlight the identity while at the same time maintaining authenticity to keep up with the market trend and demand.

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