

Promoting the Heritage of Batik in Indonesia through the Empowerment of Batik Semarang Craftsmen

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Abstract

Batik is the identity and personality of the Indonesian people which is developed continuously. Many regions in Indonesia have had declared their cultures through the media of Batik. In Japanese colonialization era, Batik Semarang used to be very popular as one of Indonesian heritages. Nowadays, however, the popularity of Batik Semarang is less compared to other kinds of Batik exist in Indonesia. Semarang has a Batik heritage that has already went through value crystallization, and it also has unique characteristics within itself. The objectives of this research are to re-promote the prestige of Batik Semarang as a heritage, so that the values of Batik Semarang can be equally compared to other kinds of Batik that have already well-known; as well as to increase the welfare of Batik Semarang craftsmen. To be able to achieve those objectives, an empowerment and development strategy of Batik Semarang needs to be composed. This research uses primary data collected by questionnaires and interviews to 17 Batik craftsmen, as well as through FGD and in-depth-interview involving 10 key persons. The collection of the sample was conducted by purposive sampling method. Key persons consist of Academicians, Business people, Government, and Community of batik craftsmen (ABGC). The result of this research shows that the level of empowerment of Batik Semarang craftsmen is still below 50%. This represents low level of empowerment of Batik Semarang craftsmen. Therefore, an empowerment and development strategy of Batik Semarang that involves the elements of Batik Semarang craftsmen and stakeholders (ABGC), needs to be composed. The empowerment strategy is determined through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and in-depth-interview, supported by quantitative evidence obtained through Analitical Hierarchy Process (AHP). The empowerment strategy of Batik Semarang craftsmen can only be implemented if an awareness from stakeholders exists, in order to fulfill the commitment in re-promote the existence and sustainability of Batik Semarang, along with its local wisdom.

Keywords : Batik, empowerment, stakeholders, AHP, Semarang, Indonesia.

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a nation rich in profucts of art and culture. Indonesia has already have 5 heritages that are known to the world. Batik, that had already known since the 7th century as one of the culutural products that have UNESCO's International acknowledgement as a national heritage, besides *wayang*, *angklung*, and *tari saman*.

Furthermore, Batik is the identity and personality of Indonesia as a nation; a product that reflects local wisdom that has to be developoed and conserved, so that it can improve the cultural image and becomes an economic activity, both in domestic and international scopes. The development of Batik in Indonesia in present days has already penetrated almost the whole area of Indonesia. Batik in each region/area has it's own uniqueness, starts from the pattern, hue, and also colors. The development of national Batik production in the year of 2012 reaches 3.13 trillion of Rupiah, while the export reaches USD 110 million (Indonesian Ministry of Industry, 2013). The biggest contributor of Batik production is Central Java province, which produces Batik Solo and Batik Pekalongan, among many.

The city of Semarang, with the existence of Batik village/area in the city, used to be glorious in terms of Batik business, as well as the cities of Solo and Pekalongan. Unfortunately, the business of Batik in Semarang in present days is getting decreased. Beside the ongoing disappearance of that particular form of art and culture Semarang posses, the opportunity of getting profit from the growing business of Batik is also vanishes (City Government of Semarang, 2013). According to Yuliati (2009), before Japan colonialization era, Batik village was the center of Batik craft in Semarang. However, the tradition of making Batik in Batik village in Semarang vanished when the city became a battlefield in that era and after the nation's independence proclamation era. The arson of Batik village happened in the Japan colonialization area created a huge impact in the disappearance of Batik Semarang.

Since 2006, the City Government of Semarang and Dekranasda have been making serious efforts to relieve the business of Batik Semarang by conducting coachings and giving financial support (capital assistance). However, these efforts have not yet showed significant success (City Government of Semarang, 2013). To relieve the Batik industry in Semarang, it is not only the responsibility of the government. The involvement from public figures, business peole, academicians, and Batik craftsmen themselves, is also needed.

Based on the explanation above, a study about empowerment and development strategy for Batik Semarang

production and the shaping of a high-quality business conduct in order to ensure the sustainability of Batik Semarang, are needed. Thus, the objective of relieving Batik Semarang as a heritage can be achieved, so that Batik Semarang can be at least equal with other kinds of batik that are already known, and the welfare of Batik Semarang craftsmen can be increased.

2. Material and Method

Community empowerment is a social approach used to improve the community's quality of living, so that it can also improve the pride of their families. Community empowerment, according to Smith (2001), is the basic element enabling someone in the community to survive, and to develop oneself in order to reach the goals in life. Empowering someone means driving him/her to be more involved in decision making and activities that can influence his/her job performance. Mayo (2000) writes about empowerment in communities and takes the stance that this is achieved through a thorough understanding of how each community is made up culturally. Uphoff (2003) describes empowerment as follows: *Empowerment is particularly challenging because of inherent ambiguity and elusiveness of what is to be measured. It can be argued with justification that empowerment does not really exist in its own right, that is really a reflection of other things that do exist. While this does not mean that we cannot measure empowerment.....*. 'Power' to identify what are kinds of power bases proposed by political scientists, sociologists and economists over many years. He concluded there are six categories of resources or assets that can be accumulated and utilized to achieve objectives: (1) economic; (2) social; (3) political; (4) informational; (5) moral; and (6) Physical.

According to Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language of the Language Center (Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia), empowerment is a process to be sappy, have power, ability and energy to conquer something. Therefore, socio-economic community empowerment can be interpreted as a process to own or control a better socio-economic aspect of living (Departement of National Education, 2002).

The meaning of empowerment in Susilowati and Mayanggita (2008) is a conscious, planned, and continuous effort to create changes and achieve clear goals, from the lower level of empowerment to the higher level, from powerless to powerful, from the condition of un-skilled to skillful, from being helped to be independent or even to be helpful to others. Therefore, the level of empowerment of Batik Semarang craftsmen can be interpreted as the level of independence of them in running their business which covers both economic and non-economic power.

In that way, community empowerment is both a process and an objective. As a process, empowerment is a series of activities to strengthen or empower minority groups in the community, including people under the poverty line. As an objective, empowerment points to a condition or result wants to be achieved by a social change; empowered community that have power, knowledge, and/or ability in fulfilling life needs (physical, economical, and social needs such as having self-confidence, ability to deliver opinions, steady job, participation in social activities, independence in doing daily tasks). The meaning of empowerment as an objective often times is used as an indicator in determining the success of empowerment as a process (Suharto, 2009).

From these concepts of empowerment explained above, it can be concluded that the empowerment of Batik Semarang craftsmen is an effort to help the craftsmen so that they can be independent, or an effort to lead the craftsmen so that they can be able to lead themselves. Thus, the industry of Batik Semarang will be able to compete with other currently existing Batik products.

To determine the objective and focus of empowerment in operational term, several indicators of empowerment are essential to understand. According to Girvan (2004) in Suharto (2009), those indicators, often called as *empowerment index*, are (1) mobility freedom, (2) the ability to buy small commodities, (3) the ability to buy large commodities, (4) the involvement in making household decisions, (5) relative confidence from family domination, (6) the awareness of law and politics, (7) the involvement in campaigns and protests, (8) economic guarantee and contribution towards family.

VeneKlasen, L., Miller, V., (2002) states the components building empowerment:

- *Power over*: power to manage someone or something. The response of this power can be in the form of obedience, rejection, or manipulation.
- *Power to*: generative or productive power that creates opportunities and non-dominant actions.
- *Power with*: power that creates a feeling that a whole is bigger than individuals exist and the group actions are more effective.
- *Power from within*: a feeling of power in each individual. The acknowledgement of acceptance and respect to one self enables the acceptance of other people as humans.

The effort to empower Batik Semarang craftsmen is based on the level of their empowerment concerning production capacity, distribution capacity, ability to access the information of market demand, and socio-cultural intelligence. This is under the assumption that craftsmen have a potential to self-organize and be independent. The empowerment of Batik craftsmen is a process that cannot be done partially, in fact it needs a comprehensive approach strategy. The effort must be done in synergy from stakeholders such as academicians, business people, government, and community (in this case, Batik craftsmen).

The subject of this research is Batik Semarang industry, while the object is the empowerment of Batik Semarang craftsmen. To figure out the level of empowerment of Batik Semarang craftsmen, a descriptive analysis is used, based on questionnaires from 17 Batik craftsmen respondents in Semarang. The aspects of empowerment being viewed include production, distribution, market demand, and socio-cultural aspects. To develop the empowerment strategy, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted, involving academician, business people/Batik traders, Department of Trading and Industry of Semarang, Cooperatives Department, and Batik Semarang craftsmen. From the FGD, an empowerment strategy could be developed. The determination of empowerment strategy priorities is done by using Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). AHP is mainly based on the people's systematic mindset to deal with the complexity it faces. Thus, a method that formulates problems in hierarchy and considerations is formulated, in order to generate relative priority scale. AHP is a flexible model enabling us to make decisions by combining considerations and personal value, logically (Saaty, 2008).

3. Results and Discussion

This discussion chapter covers the empowerment level of Batik craftsmen and empowerment strategy, both are explained in the following essay.

3.1. Empowerment Level of Batik Craftsmen Aspects

The analysis of empowerment level covers the empowerment level of these four aspects: 1) production aspect, 2) distribution aspect, 3) market demand aspect, and 4) socio-cultural aspect.

3.1.1. Empowerment Level of Production Aspect

The production of Batik Semarang includes Batik Tulis (hand-painted Batik) and Batik Cap (stamped Batik), with the main materials of cloth, paraffin/wax, and colorings. Components analyzed through production aspect are materials, human capital, financial capital, and technology. Research result shows the components explained in Table 1.

Table 1. The Empowerment Level of Production Aspect

COMPONENTS		EMPOWERMENT LEVEL PERCENTAGE	LEVEL OF EMPOWERMENT
1. Materials	1. There is many materials available in stock	88,23	High
	2. Materials are easy to get	70,58	
	3. The price is low	76,47	
	4. The quality is good	70,58	
	5. There are product substitution available	52,94	
	<i>Average</i>	<i>71,76</i>	
2. Human Capital	1. Many employees are available to hire	35,29	Low
	2. Employees are easy to get/hire	35,29	
	3. The employees' wage/salary is low	64,70	
	4. The job performance quality is good	29,41	
	5. The skill of the employees is easy to improve	41,17	
	<i>Average</i>	<i>41,17</i>	
3. Financial Capital	1. It needs large capital	29,41	Low
	2. The capital is easy to get	64,71	
	3. The cost of capital is low	70,59	
	4. There are many alternatives of capital sources	52,94	
	5. The capital is easy to be transferred to other business	23,52	
	<i>Average</i>	<i>48,24</i>	
4. Technology	1. The technology is simple	58,82	Low
	2. The technology/tool is easy to get	52,94	
	3. The price is affordable	70,59	
	4. Alternatives are available	29,41	
	5. Employees' skill is increased	23,53	
	<i>Average</i>	<i>47,06</i>	

Source: processed primary data, 2013

The component of materials the level of empowerment is high (>50%), while the components of human capital, financial capital, and technology show lower level of empowerment (50%). Although the level of empowerment of materials is high, materials are still being imported from Pekalongan or Solo. As a matter of fact, the cloth

material is still being imported from China or India. This makes the price of materials to be unstable. Overall, the level of empowerment of production is low.

3.1.2. Empowerment Level of Distribution Aspect

Market concentration of Batik Semarang is shown through the CR4 value of 75%, and Herfindahl Hirschman Index (HHI) calculation of 1889. The value of HHI between 1000-2500 shows the oligopoly market structure. The number of Batik Semarang producers as price maker is quite high, which is 76%. This is related to the product characteristics in the market, which are Batik that are unique in terms of design or pattern, so that the price is decided more by the producers.

The empowerment level of distribution aspect is measured through market scope, easiness to sell, and distribution channel availability. Most Batik Semarang producers also act as marketers, with market area in Semarang local area and some cities nearby. The marketing of Batik Semarang has not yet been big up into the national or international level. Only 44% respondents that have already market in national or international level, and for international level marketing, it has not been conducted continuously.

Looking at the easiness to sell the products, producers still experience difficulties. Only 24% respondents that stated it is easy to sell their products, while the most distribution channel used is still by selling directly to the end customers. Only 18% of respondents already has a good distribution channel.

3.1.3. Empowerment Level of Market Demand Aspect

Market demand aspect is measured through Batik Semarang industry market segment, production form to fulfill market demand, price competitiveness, and knowledge about market demand information. Market segment of Batik Semarang is middle-to-low consumers, covering 73% producers in that segment. This shows low level of empowerment. At the same time, Batik productions are being done in a massive scale or by order. 65% respondents produce in a massive scale.

Identification result of Batik craftsmen's empowerment in the indicator of price, shows that respondents stating that the price of Batik products is competitive is only 28%. The rest stated that the price is not competitive. The respondents's knowledge about market demand information is still low at 40%.

From the identification result of Batik craftsmen's empowerment in market demand aspect, it can be concluded that the empowerment is still at the low level.

3.1.4. Empowerment Level of Socio-Cultural Aspect

Empowerment identification measured through socio-cultural aspect is shown by the indicator of Batik Semarang conservation and participation level of craftsmen in activities done by Batik community.

From the identification result, it is concluded that the percentage of Batik Semarang craftsmen that feel easy to do conservation is only 24%. The rest still experience difficulties is doing so. The participation in Batik Semarang community activities is 48%. From this identification result, it can be concluded that in the socio-cultural aspect, the level is low.

3.2. Empowerment Strategy

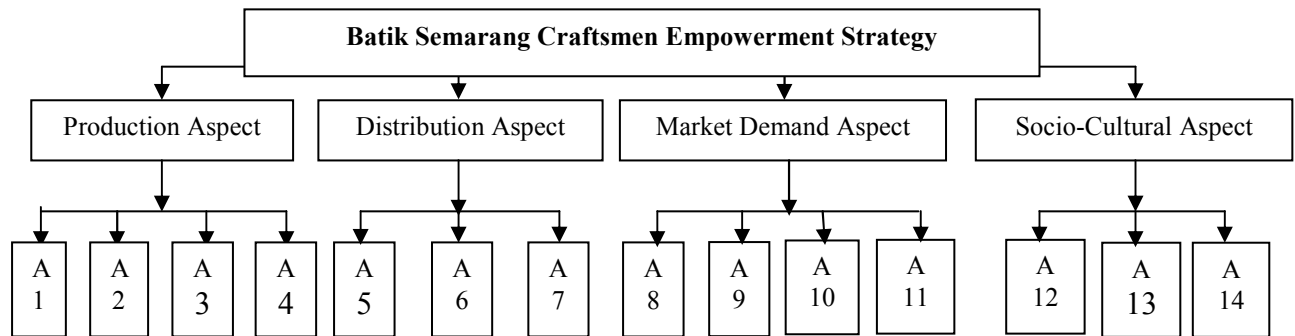
Based on several feedbacks about Batik Semarang empowerment level in the Focus Discussion Group (FGD) involving academicians, business people, government, and Batik craftsmen, a performance empowerment strategy for Batik Semarang craftsmen can be developed. The empowerment strategy covers the aspects of production, distribution, market demand, and socio-cultural. The explanation is in Table 2.

Table 2. Empowerment Strategy for Batik Semarang Craftsmen

Production Aspect	Distribution Aspect	Market Demand Aspect	Socio-Cultural Aspect
1. High availability of materials	1. Improvement in distribution system	1. Good understanding on market information, both in national and international scope	1. Creating conducive business climate
2. Well-targetted capital assistance	2. Assistance in promoting the products, both national and international scope	2. Easy to export	2. Creating Batik culture within the people of Indonesia
3. Continuous coaching on Batik production	3. Improving trade system/trade mission cooperation both in national and international scope	3. Product specification compliance to fulfill consumer demand	3. Government facilities in opening new job opportunities
4. Availability of technology alternative(s)		4. Easy to do product certification	

Source: FGD with stakeholders (ABGC)

Based on the empowerment strategy above, an AHP method is developed, as shown in Figure 1.

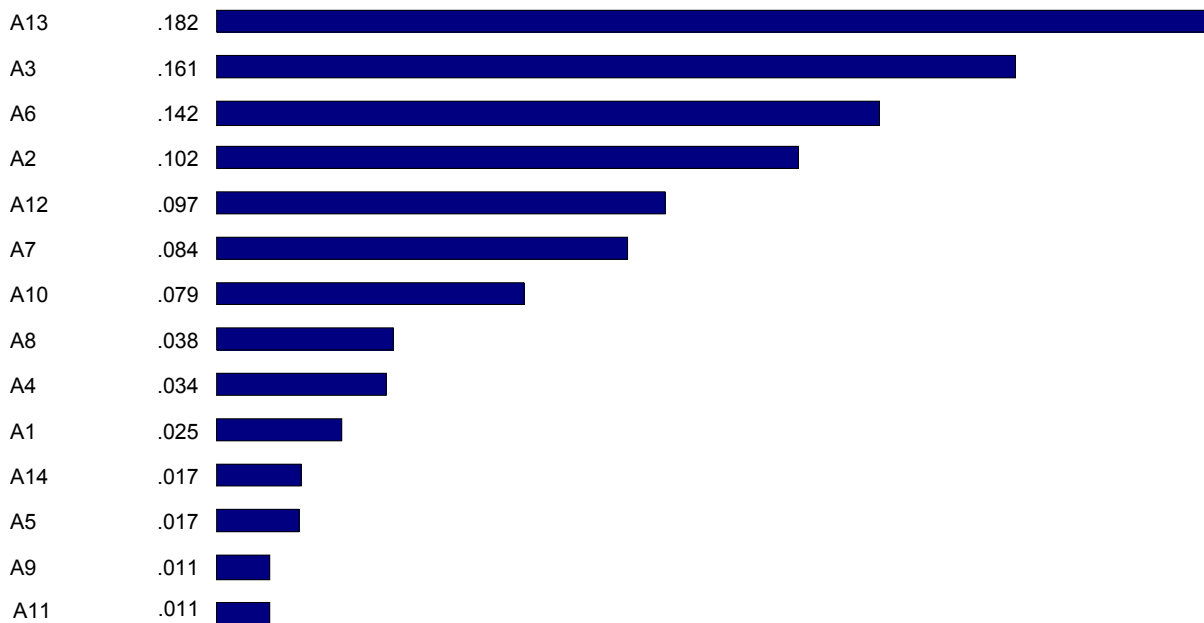


- A1 = High availability of materials
- A2 = Well-targetted capital assistance
- A3 = Continuous coachings on Batik production
- A4 = Availability of technology alternative(s)
- A5 = Improvement in distribution system
- A6 = Assistance in promoting the products, both national and international scope
- A7 = Improving trade system/trade mission cooperation both in national and international scope
- A8 = Good understanding on market information, both in national and international scope
- A9 = Easy to export
- A10 = Product specification compliance to fulfill consumer demand
- A11 = Easy to do product certification
- A12 = Creating condusive business climate
- A13 = Creating Batik culture within the people of Indonesia
- A14 = Government facilities in opening new job opportunities

Figure 1. Job Performance Empowerment Strategy for Batik Semarang Craftsmen

The result of AHP analysis covering the aspects of production, distribution, market demand, and socio-cultural, shows that the priority scale of empowerment strategy can be explained by Figure 2.

OVERALL INCONSISTENCY INDEX = 0.06



- A1 = High availability of materials
- A2 = Well-targetted capital assistance
- A3 = Continuous coachings on Batik production **)**
- A4 = Availability of technology alternative(s)

- A5 = Improvement in distribution system
A6 = **Assistance in promoting the products, both national and international scope** (***)
A7 = Improving trade system/trade mission cooperation both in national and international scope
A8 = Good understanding on market information, both in national and international scope
A9 = Easy to export
A10 = Product specification compliance to fulfill consumer demand
A11 = Easy to do product certification
A12 = Creating conducive business climate
A13 = **Creating Batik culture within the people of Indonesia** (*)
A14 = Government facilities in opening new job opportunities
) 1st priority of empowerment strategy
) 2nd priority of empowerment strategy
) 3th priority of empowerment strategy

Figure 2. Alternative Priority of Empowerment strategy from All Aspects

Figure 2 shows alternative priorities from highest to lowest. The value of overall inconsistency ratio shows the number of 0.06 which means the analysis result is valid.

4. Concluding Remarks

4.1. Conclusions

- The empowerment strategy is prioritized within the production, distribution, demand and socio-cultural aspects. These selected strategies are determined by the FDG and in-depth interviews, and supported by quantitative evidence obtained from the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP).
- The empowerment strategy analysis shows low results in all aspects (production, distribution, market demand, and socio-cultural).
- The AHP analysis shows alternative priorities of performance empowerment of Batik Semarang. Three main priorities from empowerment strategy are (1) Creating Batik culture within the people of Indonesia, (2) Continuous coaching on Batik production, and (3) Assistance in promoting the products, both in national and international scope.

4.2. Recommendation

Stakeholder awareness is much needed (from academicians, bussiness people, government, and community); to be involved in the empowerment strategy implementation, in order to achieve the goals of the empowerment of Batik Semarang craftsmen.

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