

# Socio-Economic Analysis of Tourist Area Community: A Case Study of Kauman Batik Village, Solo, Indonesia

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## Abstract

Kauman Batik Village in Solo City, Central Java Province, Indonesia has been widely known as the center of Indonesian batik production and one of the leading tourist destinations in Indonesia. However, the lives of the people settling in the village still fall into poverty. Related to this fact, this research aimed to determine whether the existence of Kauman Batik Village has social and economic impacts on the community around the village. This research is a phenomenological research with a qualitative approach. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with several informants considered being able to represent and understand the socio-economic situation of Kauman Batik Village. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using the principle of data triangulation. The results showed that there were social and economic imbalances in the community of Kauman Batik Village. The social imbalance occurred because of the erosion of religious values upheld firmly by the village predecessors. Besides, the younger generation's interest in becoming batik craftsmen was increasingly low. Instead, they preferred migrating outside the village. On another side, the economic imbalance emerged due to the decreasing batik production of Kauman Batik Village. Most of the batiks sold were machine-produced batiks, not handwritten batiks that have higher quality and price.

**Keywords:** Kauman Batik Village, socio-economic analysis, tourism

## 1. Introduction

With the presence of many batik-producing cities nowadays, Indonesian batiks have penetrated the world market, one of which is Batik Keris from Solo, Central Java. Therefore, it is no wonder Solo batiks have become a cultural attraction for both local and foreign tourists visiting Surakarta City. One of the famous tourism villages in the city is Kauman Village.

Kauman Village has increasingly developed with many successful batik producers and traders, almost similar to Laweyan Village. This is inseparable from the peculiarities and appeal of Solo batiks, supported by historical documentation with its attraction of Batik making process as the potential of Kauman Batik Tourism Village. Economic activities are also one of the aspects continuously growing in Kauman Village, Surakarta. The development of economic activities in Kauman Village, which was initially a *santri* (Muslim student) village, began when the wives of the *'abdi dalem'* (royal servants) promoted their skills in making Batik. The batik making activity is the forerunner of economic growth in Kauman. It was initially only a side activity to meet the batik needs of *Keraton* (Palace) *Kasunanan* Surakarta, but now has developed as the community livelihood. Considered profitable, batik making activities continue to progress, both in term of production and the technique of manufacture.

The development of the batik industry in Kauman is followed by the advance of the batik trade. Migrant people also get involved in growing the business climate in Kauman Village, especially along the main road. The economic growth and good environmental carrying capacity bring up a discourse mentioning Kauman as creative economy-based Batik Village which becomes the regional characteristic. Additionally, the design of Kauman Batik Village also develops economic activities. On the other hand, the location of Kauman Batik Village is not always profitable in developing economic activities. One of the real examples is the limited land of Kauman as the downtown area with a high land value that hampers the development of activities, particularly for people with limited capital.

This research aimed to determine the changes and influences of Kauman Batik Village on the socio-economic life of the surrounding community. As described earlier, Kauman Batik Village was initially a village inhabited by *'abdi dalem pamethakan'* and known as a religious village. But, it now has turned into Kauman Batik Tourism Village.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Tourism Activities and Impacts

According to Spillane (1994:14), the development of the tourism sector relates to social, economic and political aspects. This is consistent with Indonesia's Law No.10 of 2009 concerning Tourism stating that the tourism administration is aimed at increasing the national income to improve the people's welfare and prosperity, expanding and equalizing business opportunities and job vacancies, encouraging the regional development, introducing and empowering the tourism attractiveness and destinations in Indonesia, as well as fostering the

love of motherland and strengthening the inter-nation friendship. Moreover, the development of tourism encourages and accelerates economic growth.

The theory above implies that the Tourism Economy is strongly related to the People Economy. That is, tourist destinations built in a region will indirectly increase the people's economic growth and bring about social changes. This is because tourist destinations will create jobs for the community living around.

Linear with this, the impacts of tourism on the socio-economic conditions of local communities are categorized by Cohen (1984) into eight major groups, namely (1) the impact on foreign exchange earnings, (2) the impact on community income, (3) the impact on job opportunities, (4) the impact on prices, (5) the impact on community distribution or profits, (6) the impact on ownership and control, (7) the impact on development in general, and (8) the impact on government revenues.

## 2.2. Kauman Batik Tourism Village, Solo

Kauman, which is so well known by almost all Javanese people, is the name of a village located in the middle of Surakarta city, in conjunction with the Great Mosque (*Masjid Agung Surakarta*) and the *Keraton* Square or the Regency Square. Kauman began to grow when Paku Buwono III built the Great Mosque in 1757 AD. The King appointed *Tafsir Anom* (*tafsir* means 'explain' and *anom* means 'the wider society') as the *penghulu* (head) of the Great Mosque. In executing the duties, *Tafsir Anom* was assisted by other *abdi dalem ulama* (royal ulemas, 'ulemas' mean religious preachers), including *Ketib* and *Merbot*. The royal ulemas and their *santries* (Muslim students) lived around the Great Mosque which later expanded and was named 'Kauman' meaning the *Kampung* (village) of "Kaum" (people).

The birth of Kauman Village began with the placement of *abdi dalem pamethakan* who served in the religion and mosque sectors (Nugraheni, 2009). The *abdi dalem* was named *Kanjeng Kyai Penghulu* Mohammad Thohar Hadiningrat who lived around the Great Mosque. The *abdi dalem* might only occupy that land with no ownership rights. The land is a gift from Sunan PB III.

The land occupied by the *penghulu* (head) along with *abdi dalem pamethakan* was named 'Perkauman' by the *Keraton* meaning the land where people live on, which is now known as Kauman. The similar meaning of the name of Kauman Village is also implied from Sajid's (1984) explanation (in Javanese), "*Panggenahing abdi dalem ngulama, saking pangkat bupati sak andhahanipun sadaya, dumugi kaum, naminipun kampung kauman.*"

Thus, the first resident of Kauman Village is the *penghulu* (head) overseeing several positions under him who managed and assisted his tasks in the mosque sector, especially the Great Mosque.

The *Keraton* party also fulfilled the needs of the *abdi dalem* as part of the *Keraton*, covering salaries and life insurance. However, most of the *abdi dalem* were not so concerned about their salaries because their focus was only on how to serve the King. Accordingly, to minimize the economic gap, their wives who were generally good at making batik (hand-waxed batik) must help meet or increase their family income.

The batik making activity, which was originally only for fulfilling spare time and meeting the *Keraton* batik needs, now has grown into a profitable business as the times and needs continue to develop. The *Keraton* may not be able to fulfil all the needs of the *abdi dalem*. Meanwhile, the *abdi dalem pamethakan* in Kauman mostly do productive activities. Regarding this, Batik provides the most possible alternative for them. In subsequent developments, the batik making skill is still intensively developed by the wives of the *abdi dalem pamethakan* (Nugraheni, 2009). The development of batik making activities in Kauman Village is the forerunner of economic growth. Similarly, Ayu (2011) stated that batik making was initially only a side activity to meet the batik needs of *Keraton Kasunan* Surakarta, but now it has developed as the community livelihood. Because of its profitability, batik making activities experience increased production in order to meet the sales demands outside the region.

The development of batik making activities in Kauman is followed by the advance of the batik trade. Migrant people also get involved in growing the business climate in Kauman Village, especially along the main road (Ayu, 2011). This makes Kauman a commercial center, where strategic locations on the main road are owned by migrants.

In 2010, the government of Solo through the Mayor, Joko Widodo, inaugurated Kauman Batik Village as a Batik Tourism Village. The inauguration of the batik village was marked by a Batik Making Event participated by a Thousand School Children.

## 3. Research Method

This research is a qualitative research, aimed to determine the influences of Kauman Batik Village on the socio-economic life of the surrounding community. Qualitative research aims to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and people thoughts individually or in groups. Some descriptions are used to find principles and explain what leads to a conclusion. Qualitative research is inductive in which researchers let problems arise from the data or let them open to interpretation. Qualitative data are usually collected by careful observation, covering descriptions in detailed contexts coupled with in-depth

interview records and the results of the document and record analysis.

In qualitative research, there is a phenomenological research method. Phenomenological research is a study of subjective or phenomenological experience or a study of consciousness from one's perspective. In phenomenological research, the main data source is in-depth conversations between researchers and informants as participants. Researchers should help participants describe their life experiences without leading the discussion. Furthermore, during in-depth conversations, researchers should try to add ways to participants to get full access to their life experiences (Moleong, 1997).

Phenomenological research involves four stages as follows:

1. Data classification, referring to the process of identifying and holding a presumption of suspended beliefs and opinions about the phenomenon being studied;
2. Intuition, which is formed when researchers open the meaning of the nature of the phenomenon of people who have experienced it;
3. Data analysis, for example, filtering important conversation as well as categorizing and interpreting new things from a phenomenon;
4. Description, referring to the stage of describing what researchers start to understand and interpret related to a phenomenon.

Data in this research were collected using the following technique:

1. Interview

Moleong (1997:186) explained that an interview is a conversation with a specific intention carried out by two parties, namely *interviewer* who asks questions and *interviewee* who answers the questions. Interviews are generally divided into two, namely structured interviews and unstructured interviews. In structured interviews, interviewers set up problems to be asked (questions). Meanwhile, unstructured interviews have no specific set of predetermined questions, are less interrupted and arbitrary. Unstructured interviews are used to obtain non-standard or single information (Moleong, 1997:190).

In this research, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews. In prior, the researcher prepared questions to be asked to the informants. However, the interview implementation was adjusted to the informant circumstances. The main questions proposed to the informants are regarding these following points:

- a) The length of time they have lived in Kauman Batik Village
- b) Their occupations
- c) Impacts of the Batik Center on their daily income

The informants involved in this research include:

- Mr. A, an employee of Gunawan Batik Store and a native of Kauman
- Mrs. B, a food vendor around Kauman
- Mrs. C, a tourist from outside Solo
- Mr. D, a pedicab driver who usually escorts visitor to Kauman Batik Village
- Mr. E, a batik craftsman

This research took place in Kauman Batik Village, Pasar Kliwon District, Solo City. The reason underlying the selection of this location was that Kauman Batik Village is the Batik Center in Solo City. Besides, Kauman is one of the centers of economic activities in Surakarta because there are many stores built up there. Also, the location of Kauman is very strategic, which is close to the downtown and economic centers such as Klewer Market and nearby the cultural center of *Keraton Kasunanan* Surakarta. Kauman Batik Village was originally a settlement of the *abdi dalem* of *Keraton Kasunanan* Surakarta that even to date still preserves the tradition of making batik.

Data validity in this research was tested using triangulation. The data triangulation was performed by comparing the interview data with other document literature data as well as comparing the opinions of one informant with other informants.

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

One of the batik cultural tourism villages in Solo City is Kauman Batik Village. This village is one of the must-visit destinations for tourists. There is a quite long history behind the rise of this village. According to the results of the interview with Informant A, the researcher got a story that the former inhabitants of Kauman Village were *abdi dalem pamethakan* under the authority of the *penghulu* (called *Reh Pengulon*) who handled the religious affairs of the *Keraton*. In the past, most of the Kauman people used to work as *abdi dalem pamethakan* and revealed themselves as Muslims. They were placed in Kauman to organize religious activities from the *Keraton*. There were also some rules applied in Kauman Village, that the workers and *Pangindhung* (one who lives in another's home or on another's property) settling in the land of Pakauman Surakarta were forbidden to commit immorality and must hide *gamelan* (a kind of musical ensemble of Indonesia) during any *hajatan* (traditional ceremony for celebration). These rules were issued by Paku Buwana VII and addressed to the *penghulu* as the trusted one to implement Islamic law in Kauman. The emergence of these rules made Kauman Village's life

more religious than other villages at that time.

Furthermore, Informant B stated a fact that since a few years ago, there have been many foreign tourists and local tourists visiting Kauman Batik Village. Informant B also told that there were quite a lot of tourists buying the foods she sold. It turns out that the existence of Kauman Batik Village can empower the economy of the surrounding community selling goods or foods.

Moreover, Informant C recognized that this village was very attractive for tourists because it provided visitors with the experience to see and learn how to make batik directly. She added that the price of batiks produced in this village also matched with the quality, considering the complicated process of making batik. This recognition is reinforced by Informant D stating that many tourists asked to be taken to Kauman Batik Village, usually after travelling from the *Keraton*. Afterwards, they requested to be escorted to the souvenir centers. The statement of Informant D implies that the existence of Kauman Batik Village can also lift the economy of the surrounding community who worked in the field of transportation, such as pedicab drivers. Those who were initially unemployed finally saw this opportunity, so they switched their professions to be pedicab drivers. That is, one of the positive social impacts of a tourism activity in an area is the creation of job opportunities.

Furthermore, Informant E and Informant A revealed that there was a community of batik craftsmen in Kauman Batik Village whose members came not only from Kauman Village but also from outside Kauman Village. In addition to the community of batik craftsmen, there was also a cooperative of batik craftsmen run in an Islamic way. The cooperative even still exists up today. Not only the cooperative but also all sectors in the village employed an Islamic way. In the past, Kauman Batik Village was a village of *abdi dalem* who were *priyayis* with their strong religion. Therefore, it is no longer surprising that Islamic principles are often brought into various matters in the village, one of which is in cooperative management. As an example, Gunawan Batik, which has existed since the 1960s, applied the business management in an Islamic way from the first to second generation. But, since the third generation in the 2000s, it has officially turned into modern management without completely abandoning Islamic values.

However, at the end of the interview, Informant E claimed that he was not a native of Kauman, but an outsider. It was found that batik craftsmen in Kauman village rarely came from the local community because most of the surrounding young people (younger generation) were no longer interested in engaging in that field. Unfortunately, most of them would rather migrate outside the village.

More sadly, there had been a lot of batiks in Kauman Batik Village which were not produced by the village itself. Instead, the batiks sold in the village were taken from other regions in Solo city. In other words, batik craftsmen in Kauman Batik Village who could produce batiks by hand (using a *canting*) already decreased in number. This was due to the lack of original Kauman craftsmen as well as the increasingly advanced times and technology, automatically increasing machine-produced batiks (without using a *canting*). The use of machines in producing batiks is certainly faster and more practical.

Based on the explanation of the interview results above, the main findings of this research are as follows:

- 1) Kauman Village, which was initially inhabited by *abdi dalem*, has changed into a tourist village;
- 2) The changes have positive effects on the social life of the community;
- 3) The existence of Kauman Batik Village can lift the economy of the surrounding community;
- 4) The batik craftsmen in Kauman Batik Village mostly come from outside Kauman Village, not from the local community;
- 5) The younger generation of Kauman Village prefers migrating outside the village and finding other jobs to being batik craftsmen;
- 6) There have been many batiks which are not self-produced by the craftsmen in Kauman Village, but taken from other regions;
- 7) Batik craftsmen in Kauman Village have rarely made batiks by hand or using a *canting*.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Kauman Batik Village currently has changed a lot from that in the past. The changes positively affect the socio-economic life of the surrounding community. The changes include the decreasing number of local inhabitants who become batik craftsmen and the increasing quantity of batiks taken from other regions around Solo City to be then sold in Kauman Village. From the research's observation, there is only one store which self-produces batik in Kauman Village. Surprisingly, the craftsman is from outside Kauman region.

Additionally, several efforts have been made by the relevant parties to preserve Kauman Batik Village, one of which is by creating a cooperative of batik craftsmen. This cooperative is a bond to coordinate batik craftsmen and business owners in Kauman Batik Village. Besides, a community that accommodates the aspirations of batik craftsmen and business owners has been developed to advance Kauman Batik Village.

Based on the researcher's observation, the completeness of facilities and infrastructure in Kauman Batik Village is less supporting for attraction activities of a tourist village. Therefore, the researcher recommended the

local authorities to provide additional facilities and infrastructure so as to improve the attractiveness of Kauman Village. Furthermore, the high social imbalance of the people surrounding Kauman Batik Village is expected to be minimized by the synergy of various related parties.

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