

Community Empowerment through the Development and Marketing of Traditional Batik in Giriloyo Batik Village

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Abstract.

This study explores how the people of Giriloyo Batik Village in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, are empowered through the development of traditional batik production and marketing. As one of the oldest batik-producing centers, Giriloyo reflects strong cultural identity and resilience. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The research highlights how community-based programs—such as training in batik techniques, natural dyeing, and participation in exhibitions—have strengthened artisans' capabilities, especially among women and youth. Empowerment is evident not only in improved economic outcomes but also in increased pride, collaboration, and cultural continuity. Giriloyo demonstrates how tradition and innovation can work together to achieve sustainability. This case provides valuable insights into how heritage-based industries can transition from informal to organized, community-led enterprises. Ongoing support from universities, government, and private institutions remains essential to sustaining these impacts and ensuring that batik continues to thrive as both a cultural and economic asset.

Keywords: *Batik industry; Community empowerment; Cultural preservation; Giriloyo; Marketing strategy.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's cultural heritage is reflected in various traditional crafts, with batik standing out as one of the most iconic and historically rooted. Recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, batik is not only a form of artistic expression but also an economic resource for many local communities. One such center of traditional batik is Giriloyo Batik Village in Wukirsari, Imogiri, Bantul, Yogyakarta. Known for its distinctive batik tulis (hand-drawn batik), Giriloyo has preserved techniques passed down through generations. The local government's recognition of batik as a cultural asset is reflected in its support and promotion efforts. However, in recent years, the village has faced significant challenges related to the sustainability and competitiveness of its batik production. UNESCO's recognition has brought new visibility to batik, but preservation efforts must be accompanied by innovations in education and community involvement. (Evita et al., 2022)

Traditional batik artisans in Giriloyo struggle with limited market access, inadequate digital literacy, and a lack of business innovation. These issues are compounded by the rise of mass-produced and printed batik, which has saturated the market with low-cost alternatives, thereby threatening the survival of traditional craftsmanship. While batik remains a valuable cultural asset, its potential as a driver of community-based economic development is often underutilized.

Community participation is a critical factor in ensuring the success and sustainability of empowerment initiatives. Meaningful engagement must go beyond one-time training programs and should involve local actors in planning, execution, and evaluation. In Giriloyo, the involvement of younger generations in batik production has begun to bridge the digital divide, introducing new perspectives and skills into a traditionally manual process .

Despite existing efforts, there is a gap in integrated programs that simultaneously address production quality, entrepreneurial skills, and digital marketing within the batik community. Most previous initiatives have focused on isolated aspects—either training, product development, or marketing—without a holistic approach that ensures long-term impact and sustainability.(Maimunah et al., 2021) emphasize that a structured empowerment model, such as that applied in the Grobogan batik industry, can offer a framework for integrated development by combining cultural preservation with entrepreneurial skill-building.

Therefore, this study aims to explore a community empowerment model that enhances both the production and marketing of traditional batik in Giriloyo. By involving artisans, youth groups, and local stakeholders, the program is designed to foster innovation while preserving tradition. Through participatory methods, including workshops, mentoring, and collaborative branding efforts, the study seeks to build a resilient batik ecosystem that benefits the entire community. The ultimate goal is to transform Giriloyo not only into a cultural heritage site but also into a sustainable economic hub driven by empowered local artisans.

II. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method with elements of Participatory Action Research (PAR). The activity took place on May 20, 2025, in Giriloyo Batik Village, Wukirsari, Imogiri, Bantul, Yogyakarta. Although the program was conducted in a single day, it was designed to create meaningful engagement, encourage critical reflection, and stimulate long-term awareness among participants.

Site Selection and Context

Giriloyo was selected for its long-standing cultural significance as a center for traditional batik tulis. According to (Mitasari et al., 2022)batik in Giriloyo is more than a traditional craft—it is a cultural lifeline that embodies the philosophies, daily routines, and economic sustenance of the community. However, industrialization, shifts in market trends, and the digital divide have challenged local artisans' ability to remain competitive. These concerns were validated through initial observations and informal interviews with batik artisans, community leaders, and youth representatives. Challenges included limited innovation, weak digital presence, low youth involvement, and fragmented collaboration among artisans.

Program Design

The empowerment activity consisted of two core sessions:

1. Product Development and Branding Workshop

Artisans were guided to reinterpret their batik motifs by linking cultural narratives with market needs. The workshop included exercises in packaging design, product differentiation, and brand positioning. As emphasized in(Mitasari et al., 2022), such

reinterpretation efforts are essential in maintaining the authenticity of traditional batik while ensuring its relevance in a dynamic marketplace.

2. **Mentoring and Reflection Dialogue**

Through small group discussions, participants identified individual and shared challenges, formulated strategies for collaboration, and received feedback from cross-national guests.

Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, including batik artisans, community youth, and facilitators. International university students and lecturers from Indonesia, Australia, Uzbekistan, the Philippines, and Malaysia joined as observers and contributed perspectives based on their disciplines and countries of origin.

Data Collection Techniques

- **Participant observation:** Noting expressions, interactions, and behavioral responses during the sessions.
- **Semi-structured interviews:** Conducted post-event with selected participants to gather feedback and personal insights.
- **Document analysis:** Reviewing training worksheets, prototype drafts, and content created during the event.

Data Validity and Analysis

To ensure reliability, research tools were reviewed by academic experts in community empowerment and cultural heritage. Thematic coding was applied to all qualitative data, focusing on emergent patterns such as creative confidence, marketing readiness, and intergenerational collaboration. This is in line with (Maimunah et al., 2021), who emphasized that integrated empowerment efforts—combining product development and marketing—can enhance the sustainability of traditional batik enterprises.

Although the intervention was short in duration, the program was designed as a prototype for scalable and replicable empowerment models in other traditional craft villages. Follow-up activities, including virtual mentoring and social media monitoring, were proposed as a continuation of the initiative. Furthermore, the engagement with students and lecturers from other countries fostered a broader understanding of how local heritage crafts can thrive within the global creative economy.

In conclusion, the method used in this study combined structured training with experiential learning and cross-cultural collaboration to generate immediate impact and long-term potential for community transformation.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In addition, the findings align with research by Isa et al. (2023), who conducted a value chain and stakeholder analysis of the batik tulis industry in Indonesia. Their study emphasizes the importance of recognizing each actor's role in the production-to-market chain—including raw material suppliers, artisans, intermediaries, and market enablers—in order to enhance efficiency, fairness, and competitiveness across the sector. In Giriloyo, participants began to reflect on their

own position within this chain, and discussions during the mentoring session highlighted the need for stronger collaboration between producers and local support institutions.

The findings are further supported by (Syed Shaharuddin et al., 2021), who reviewed batik production in Malaysia and Indonesia and identified key challenges and innovations in the 21st century. Their research highlights the urgent need for adopting sustainable practices, integrating modern design trends, and strengthening artisan communities to remain competitive in the global market.

Similarly, (Kusumastuti & Sari, 2023) underline the role of small and medium creative industries in strengthening tourism potential through cultural products. Their study in Surakarta confirms that collaborative innovation, especially in branding and customer engagement, can uplift regional economies and bring long-term benefits to tourism-driven sectors. (Kusnanto et al., 2024) also emphasize that empowerment and innovation strategies are essential for business resilience in batik and weaving sectors. Their findings support the need for participatory approaches that build entrepreneurial capabilities and adaptability among traditional craft producers, who conducted a value chain and stakeholder analysis of the batik tulis industry in Indonesia. Their study emphasizes the importance of recognizing each actor's role in the production-to-market chain—including raw material suppliers, artisans, intermediaries, and market enablers—in order to enhance efficiency, fairness, and competitiveness across the sector. In Giriloyo, participants began to reflect on their own position within this chain, and discussions during the mentoring session highlighted the need for stronger collaboration between producers and local support institutions.

The implementation of the empowerment program in Giriloyo Batik Village yielded several noteworthy outcomes. First, the artisans gained new insights into branding and cultural storytelling. Many participants were able to articulate the uniqueness of their batik motifs in relation to local values and historical identity. This ability to narrate their products is essential in the era of digital marketing and aligns with (Suhairi et al., 2024), who argue that value-based promotion significantly boosts consumer engagement for traditional crafts.

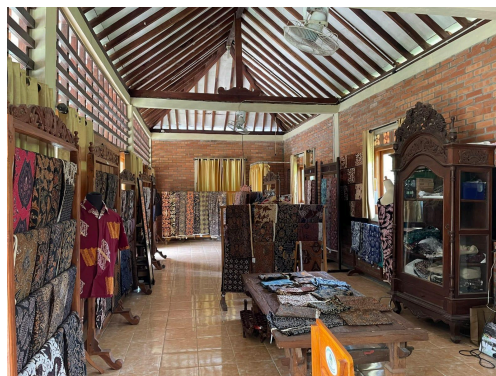


Figure 1. Overview of visual Batik

Moreover, participants developed stronger awareness of visual presentation and packaging, aspects often overlooked in small-scale batik production. Several artisan groups redesigned their packaging to appeal to a broader market, including tourists and online buyers. This finding is supported by (Qurrata et al., 2021), who emphasize that the digitalization of marketing mix elements—particularly promotion and product design—enhances the competitiveness of batik-based MSMEs.

While the program was limited to a single day, it initiated collaborative discussions among artisans, youth, and facilitators. Some youth participants expressed renewed interest in participating in the batik business after exposure to the branding strategies discussed. These changes reflect the importance of community-based innovation in sustaining craft traditions in rural areas.

Key Theme	Findings from Field	Supporting Literature
Branding and Cultural Storytelling	Artisans redefined their product narratives using local values and heritage motifs	Suhairi et al. (2024)
Packaging and Product Innovation	Improved packaging to attract broader markets including tourists and online buyers	Qurrata et al. (2021)
Role in the Value Chain	Artisans identified their place and roles within the production-marketing chain	Isa et al. (2023)
Technology and E-Commerce Adoption	Initial exposure to digital promotion and storytelling	Asri (2021)
Innovation in Batik Sector	Needs for sustainability, design renewal, and stronger artisan networks	Syed Shaharuddin et al. (2023)
Tourism and Creative Economy	Potential to uplift local economy through cultural-based tourism marketing	Kusumastuti & Sari (2021)
Empowerment and Business Resilience	Collaborative innovation and entrepreneurship boost resilience among artisans	Kusnanto, Runturambi, & Rofii (2022)

Furthermore, this program validated earlier findings by (Asri, 2021), who highlighted the role of technology adoption and e-commerce in strengthening competitive advantage in Giriloyo's batik sector. Though still in its early stages, the willingness of participants to experiment with digital promotion and storytelling indicates a cultural shift toward modernization without compromising heritage.

The discussion also revealed that the presence of international observers added credibility and motivation to the local artisans. The cross-cultural exchange encouraged reflection and instilled pride in preserving their local identity. Overall, the results demonstrate that even short-term interventions, when structured around local needs and cultural relevance, can catalyze meaningful transformation.

These findings point to the necessity of follow-up programs that focus on mentoring, access to digital tools, and partnership building. Establishing collaborative networks and continuous training initiatives may sustain the enthusiasm and skills gained from this initial effort.

IV. CONCLUSION

The community empowerment initiative conducted in Giriloyo Batik Village has shown significant impact in a relatively short timeframe. Through the participatory activities, both artisans and youth demonstrated enhanced engagement, a stronger understanding of branding concepts, and

a renewed motivation to innovate within the batik industry. The hands-on training and live demonstration sessions enabled participants to connect more deeply with the cultural and technical aspects of batik, which in turn helped them better articulate the uniqueness of their products.

V. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to express sincere appreciation to the batik artisans of Giriloyo Village for their hospitality and openness during the program. Gratitude is also extended to the international participants—students and lecturers from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Australia, and Uzbekistan—whose presence and engagement enriched the experience. Special thanks are due to the organizing committee and facilitators for their support in coordinating the one-day event. This study did not receive specific grants from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or non-profit sectors.

One of the most valuable outcomes observed was the bridging of generations—where senior artisans and local youth were able to share knowledge, perspectives, and ideas. This intergenerational dialogue planted early seeds of collaboration that could lead to more sustainable practices in the future. Moreover, the presence of international students and lecturers helped to boost confidence among the artisans and broaden their outlook on the global potential of traditional batik.

In terms of community impact, the program fostered a sense of pride, strengthened cultural identity, and introduced new marketing insights that are essential in today's competitive environment. It also increased participants' awareness of their role not only as producers, but also as storytellers and cultural ambassadors. These shifts mark the beginning of a transformation where empowerment is no longer just about economic benefits but also about identity and cultural legacy.

To build on these results, future initiatives should consider integrating ongoing mentoring, digital tools, and promotional platforms to help artisans scale their efforts. Partnerships with academic institutions and creative industry stakeholders could further support innovation and commercialization. Most importantly, any empowerment efforts should continue to center on local voices, values, and traditions, ensuring that development is both respectful and regenerative.

No new theories or formal models were introduced in this activity, but the practical insights gained can serve as foundational knowledge for designing similar short-term interventions that aim to activate cultural and entrepreneurial potential within traditional communities.

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