

National Identity Strengthening Model Through Multicultural-Based Batik Development

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Abstract

The research focuses on the National Identity Strengthening Model through Multicultural-Based Batik Development in Taman Village, Yogyakarta. Indonesia's diverse cultures, spanning various islands, lead to a multicultural society. Multiculturalism is key for harmonious coexistence and shaping the national identity. Batik, a national symbol, requires innovative motifs that incorporate cultural heritage from different regions. Conducted in Taman Village, Yogyakarta, the qualitative study involves thirteen participants: batik artisans, local residents, and batik users. Data is gathered via observation, interviews, and documentation, validated through source triangulation. Results highlight batik's development, blending diverse cultural elements into unique designs. These motifs showcase Indonesia's cultural richness, uniting traditional Yogyakarta patterns with those from different regions. This approach reinforces national identity. Positive feedback from locals and batik users demonstrates pride in promoting Indonesian culture and national identity through batik. Multicultural batik motifs effectively educate about Indonesia's heritage, particularly among the youth.

Keywords: Multiculturalism, National Identity, Batik



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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a diverse and multicultural country, primarily due to its geographical makeup of numerous islands. The inhabitants of these islands have various cultural backgrounds, resulting in a heterogeneous and multicultural society. Multiculturalism emerges as an effort to foster peaceful and harmonious coexistence among this diversity. The term "multiculturalism" is rooted in "multi" (many), "culture," and "ism" (belief/philosophy), embodying the recognition of human dignity within their unique cultural communities. Indonesia's diversity is manifested through its multitude of ethnicities, religions, cultures, and traditions, spanning from Sabang to Merauke. However, this diversity, while enriching, can also pose challenges to Indonesia's unity, captured in the national motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" (Unity in Diversity). Cultural, ethnic, and religious conflicts have influenced Indonesia's diversity dynamics from the old order to the present day, posing a significant threat to national unity. Since the Reform era, the Indonesian government has adopted a multicultural approach to address diversity issues.

In this context, multiculturalism contributes to the distinct identity of a nation, setting it apart from others. Each nation possesses a unique identity shaped by its history. Over time, technological advancements risk eroding a nation's identity. Tangible and intangible cultural elements constitute a nation's identity, with tangible aspects being visible artifacts and intangible aspects residing in societal practices. Batik, a traditional fabric-making technique, is a quintessential example of Indonesian culture. It involves special dyeing techniques using wax to create intricate patterns. Batik's historical significance traces back to the Majapahit era and has remained popular through the centuries. However, contemporary challenges include waning interest among the youth, who are more attracted to modern fashion trends and

international styles. This trend threatens to undermine the appreciation and understanding of batik's cultural value.

National identity entails the inheritance of a nation's unique culture and the identification of individuals with these cultural elements. To safeguard and enhance batik's role as a national identity, innovation in motif creation is essential. Integrating motifs that symbolize various cultures or natural resources from different regions can imbue batik with multicultural meaning, encouraging the younger generation to preserve and appreciate this cultural heritage. In Yogyakarta's Taman Village, known for its batik production, the potential for multicultural-based batik motifs is yet to be fully explored. Thus, this research aims to delve into the development of such motifs in this village.

RESEARCH METHODS

The study focuses on the National Identity Strengthening Model through Multicultural-Based Batik Development in Taman Village, Kraton Sub-District, Yogyakarta. The research was conducted from February to March 2023. The research approach employed is descriptive qualitative, aimed at elucidating current issues based on data. This research involves 13 research subjects, including batik artisans, local residents, and batik users. Data was collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, with data validation conducted using source triangulation.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Taman Village is located in Patehan Sub-District, Kraton, Yogyakarta. The name "Taman" comes from Pesanggrahan Tamansari, a large artificial lake connected to the kraton's center through Segaran canal. First constructed in 1758 by Sri Sultan Hamengku Buwono I under the leadership of Bupati Madiun Raden Ranga Prawirasentika, and executed by Bupati Kyai Tumenggung Mangoendipoero, Tamansari was initially built for defense purposes but also reflects the pursuit of worldly pleasures and divine rules. Taman Village is predominantly inhabited by "abdi dalem" (palace attendants) and palace soldiers, also known as residents of Jeron Beteng (within the fortress), due to its location within the vast Kraton Kasultanan Yogyakarta area. As a result, the community here is familiar with both foreign and local tourists, as the village supports the surrounding tourist attractions.

The village's distinct features include densely populated settlements, narrow alleyways mainly accessible by motorcycles, bicycles, rickshaws, or on foot. It comprises 13 neighborhoods (RT) and 3 community units (RW). The village exudes a calming atmosphere despite the closely packed houses, creating a charming rural ambiance. Additionally, some houses lack fences, allowing their front yards to blend seamlessly with the street. Taman Village holds cultural and heritage potential, especially in batik painting and batik drawing craftsmanship. These techniques involve painting on fabric using brushes or "canting" (a tool for applying hot wax), deviating from strict traditional batik patterns. The motifs and colors in these batik forms are not bound by conventional standards. The batik painting process demands meticulous precision, patience, and creativity, leading to longer production times and higher prices compared to other batik types. The village also boasts a "cyber village" aspect, where residents are connected to the internet. Tamansari residents actively contribute to environmental preservation by creating gardens and cultivating rare plants. Many residents turn their yards and homes into spaces for relaxation and enjoying coffee.

Discussion

The abundance of cultures in Indonesia contributes to the nation's diverse range of cultural identities. A nation's identity can be seen as its uniqueness, characteristics, or

distinctiveness that differentiate it from other nations (Widodo, et al., 2015:2). The diversity of ethnic groups forms one of the foundations of Indonesia in building its identity within the framework of cultural diversity. One of these diversities is the culture of batik. Batik, as an Indonesian cultural heritage recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage, plays a crucial role in constructing and preserving the nation's identity. Preserving the nation's identity can be achieved through the medium of batik by combining various characteristics of Indonesia. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, there aren't many multicultural-themed batik motifs that could become a national identity. This necessitates its development. Addressing the need for a national identity that reflects Indonesia's cultural richness, the development of multicultural-themed motifs in batik in Yogyakarta is crucial. It will not only enrich our cultural heritage but also provide broader recognition of diversity and cultural variety across Indonesia.

The adoption of multicultural motifs in Yogyakarta's batik holds the potential to be a symbol representing a unified and strong national identity. Through this development, the younger generation will be more connected to their cultural roots, becoming enthusiastic about preserving, learning, and appreciating the unique cultural heritage spread throughout Indonesia. The development of multicultural-based batik involves an initial phase of conducting in-depth research and study about the cultures one wishes to represent in the batik. Situated in the Kraton area of Yogyakarta, Taman Village is an area full of batik artisans. However, the batik motifs created in this village rarely touch upon multicultural themes. Therefore, it's important to undertake a broader and deeper development process by incorporating multicultural elements into the batik produced in this village. There's an opportunity to represent Indonesia's cultural diversity more comprehensively. After understanding the cultures to be represented, the next step is to identify distinct motifs from those cultures. These motifs can take the form of geometric shapes, flora, fauna, traditional symbols, or other visual representations that hold specific meanings within the cultures to be expressed in the multicultural batik. The implementation stage involves transferring the chosen motifs onto the fabric, drawing them on cotton cloth (*mori*), and then painting them with hot wax and colors to create the batik craft.



Figure 1. The Result of Multicultural-themed Batik Development

Indonesia possesses a wide array of motifs that are tied to local cultures. Several factors influence the emergence of batik motifs, including geographical location. Coastal regions produce motifs related to marine life, while mountainous areas draw inspiration from the surrounding natural environment. Factors such as the local community's characteristics, lifestyle, religious beliefs, traditions, as well as the natural conditions and the diversity of flora and fauna, also influence the creation of batik motifs. Here is an explanation of the development of multicultural-themed batik motifs:

1. Bali Traditional House Motif. This motif symbolizes the distinctive design of traditional houses in Bali. The philosophy of Bali's traditional house, known as "Tri Hita Karana," emphasizes the harmony between humans, nature, and spirituality or their beliefs.

2. Papua Traditional House Motif. This motif represents the characteristic form of traditional houses in Papua. The philosophy behind Papua's traditional houses emphasizes values of unity, shared thoughts, common goals, and the representation of personal identity and dignity.
3. Lampung Traditional House Motif. This motif embodies the unique architecture of traditional houses in Lampung. The philosophy of Lampung's traditional house reflects openness, self-improvement, and the pursuit of becoming better. The motif represents identity, religiosity, hope, masculinity, and courage.
4. Sunflower Motif. This motif symbolizes the sunflower, representing tranquility and often associated with joy or positive thoughts due to its bright color.
5. Dayak Shield Motif. This motif features a creeping vine, symbolizing growth and life's journey. The vine symbolizes the length and path of human life, reminding us that only God can determine its duration.
6. Parang Motif. Originating from Central Java, the Parang motif holds a deep message. "Parang," meaning slope or cliff, represents the diagonal lines in this batik design. Resembling the letter "S," it signifies the need to persevere through life's challenges and obstacles.
7. Maluku Special Motif. Originating from Maluku, the boat symbol represents the region's archipelagic nature and the fishing-based livelihood of its people. With the dominance of fishing and seafood as their primary protein source, the motif reflects their way of life.
8. Sulus (Vine) Motif. Originating from Java and Sumatra, this motif symbolizes strength, comfort, and beauty.

The development of multicultural-based batik motifs considers the motifs mentioned above as inspiration, aiming to create unique batik patterns that represent Indonesia's diverse cultural heritage and values. The development of multicultural-based batik, as observed from the interview results, can serve as a model to strengthen national identity, particularly in Taman Village, Kraton Sub-District, Yogyakarta. Batik is regarded as a cultural symbol representing the richness of Indonesia's cultural heritage. Here are several roles that batik plays in national identity:

1. Cultural and National Identity Representation: Batik is an Indonesian cultural heritage with significant historical, aesthetic, and philosophical value. Through its unique and intricate patterns, batik reflects cultural diversity, natural beauty, and philosophical concepts inherent in Indonesian society. Batik serves as a tangible representation of Indonesia's cultural wealth and national identity.
2. National Identity Reinforcement: Batik has the ability to enhance pride, awareness, and national identity among Indonesians. When individuals wear or use batik, they symbolically express love and appreciation for their cultural heritage and national identity. Batik acts as a unifying symbol that brings together Indonesia's diverse cultural and ethnic groups.
3. Cultural Heritage Preservation: Through the development and utilization of batik, Indonesia's cultural heritage is preserved and passed down to future generations. The traditional techniques involved in batik making, such as using "canting" (wax pen) and dyeing, are safeguarded and passed down from one generation to another. Thus, batik plays a crucial role in maintaining cultural continuity and preserving Indonesia's cultural heritage. The development of multicultural-based batik in Taman Village has heightened awareness of national identity and the cultural diversity within the community.

However, the implementation of multicultural-based batik development doesn't come without challenges. One of the obstacles faced in this development is maintaining the continuity

and authenticity of batik motifs and designs. When integrating traditional motifs from various ethnic groups, it's important to ensure that the unique characteristics of each culture are preserved. Efforts should be made to thoroughly understand and appreciate the cultural values embedded in each batik motif, so that the fusion can be carried out with respect and consciousness of the existing cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussions on the Model of Strengthening National Identity through Multicultural-Based Batik Development in Taman Village, Kraton Sub-District, Yogyakarta, it can be observed that the development of a batik model that integrates cultural elements from various ethnic groups in Indonesia into unique and distinct batik motifs has been achieved. For instance, motifs such as the Balinese traditional house motif symbolizing the unique architecture of Bali, the Papuan traditional house motif representing the distinctive houses of Papua, the Lampung traditional house motif depicting the characteristic houses of Lampung, the sunflower motif symbolizing tranquility, the Dayak shield motif reflecting the motifs found on Dayak shields, the Parang motif originating from Java, especially Central Java, the Malukan boat motif originating from Maluku, which symbolizes the archipelagic region with a livelihood dominated by fishermen and marine resources as their protein source, and the vine motif originating from Java and Sumatra, symbolizing climbing plants. These batik motifs utilized reflect Indonesia's cultural wealth, including both traditional motifs from Yogyakarta and motifs from various regions across Indonesia. The development model of batik incorporating these regional cultures strengthens national identity.

This research also demonstrates a positive response from the local residents and batik users towards the model of strengthening national identity through multicultural-based batik in Taman Village. The local residents take pride in and appreciate the effort to introduce Indonesian culture and reinforce national identity through batik. Multicultural-based batik motifs also serve as effective educational tools to introduce and raise awareness about Indonesia's cultural richness, particularly among the younger generation. Knowledge about the history, meanings, and philosophies behind each batik motif helps teach the values of local wisdom and nurtures a sense of patriotism and national identity from an early age.

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