

Development of the Culture-Based Batik Trusmi Industrial Zone

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Abstract. Batik Trusmi Industrial Area is a culture-based creative economy center in Cirebon Regency which is not only known as a producer but also as a cultural tourism destination. The purpose of this study is to explain the role of culture-based tourism communication in conservation and development in the Batik Trusmi Area, as well as identifying obstacles in developing the area in relation to its conservation and the role of the local communities and tourists in sustaining the area. In order to achieve this objective, the author utilizes a qualitative research design with the descriptive approach which includes in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation among batik artisans, managers of batik shops, tourists, and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The findings reveal that culture-based tourism communication plays an essential role in the delivery of the values, meanings, and philosophy of batik to tourists via direct communication and culture education. Nevertheless, there are some obstacles in developing the area such as artisan regeneration, printed batik competition, and the lack of supporting facilities. The involvement of the local communities and tourists play important roles in building the area identity as a sustainable cultural tourism destination.

Keywords: Batik, Cultural, Community, Tourism, Trusmi.

1 Introduction

Batik Trusmi District in the regency of Cirebon is considered to be one of the most important centers of batik industry in the province of West Java, which has huge historical and cultural significance. Besides being a famous producer of batik, the area of Trusmi is also an embodiment of the culture of the people of Cirebon. The tradition of producing batik has been going on for many years in the region, and it is very much ingrained into the socio-economic fabric of the society. Thus, Batik Trusmi becomes a practical example of merging cultural preservation and creative economy based on local wisdom [1]. The Trusmi Batik District, which was just an ordinary district producing batik, has now become a tourist attraction for batik lovers, including arts galleries, batik shops, and handicrafts. Studies indicate that the development of the Trusmi Batik District does not solely depend on the artistic aspect and local wisdom; marketing and product innovation have also played a key role in helping Trusmi Batik compete on a national level. The difficulty lies in the need to maintain a balance between tradition and the contemporary world [2]. The Trusmi Batik District has undergone a major transformation into a cultural tourism destination thanks to rapid technological advancements.

This study examines the role of culture-based tourism communication in supporting cultural preservation and the development of the creative economy in the Batik Trusmi region. This focus was chosen because tourism communication serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a means of preserving and showcasing cultural values to the broader public. The local government, in collaboration with batik entrepreneurs, is working to transform this location from a production center into a hub for cultural learning and recreation for visitors. Improving the quality of life of the surrounding community and preserving batik as a cultural heritage can be achieved through the development of local culture-based tourism [3]. Experts have found that culture-based tourism has two-pronged benefits: protecting traditional heritage and strengthening the role of local communities as key actors in the tourism industry. Local wisdom, customary values, traditional arts, and community identity are key attractions in many tourist villages, attracting visitors. This approach supports the sustainable growth of destinations without sacrificing their cultural identity and provides local communities with more economic opportunities [4]. The tourism industry in the Trusmi Batik area faces many challenges. Cultural values tend to shift as a result of modernization and commercialization, which emphasize economic factors over conservation. This raises questions about how Trusmi tourism can maintain the philosophy behind batik, an intangible cultural heritage containing philosophical and spiritual values [5]. Communication in tourism is extremely important in helping achieve destination development, particularly when the engagement of local populations, tourists, and the utilization of new media platforms to communicate comes into play. For example, research in the Kuok Subdistrict

of Kampar Regency shows that tourism communication is carried out through the development of tourism awareness groups (Pokdarwis), involving the participation of communities living near the destination, and optimizing tourism campaigns with agro-cultural themes as a local strength [6]. Tourism communication is crucial in serving as a conduit linking the local culture values to the tourists themselves. Tourism communication has the potential to enhance destination imagery, highlight the cultural value of batik, and make tourists more aware of the need for culture conservation. Using a tourism communication strategy based on local wisdom will allow cultural tourism destinations like Trusmi to be managed in a participatory fashion [7]. The success of communication in the tourism sector is greatly influenced by community involvement as the primary actor in preserving cultural heritage. The Trusmi community not only plays a role as batik producers but also as transmitters of cultural values to tourists through direct interaction, cultural stories, and batik-making practices. Active community participation in cultural tourism activities reflects the successful integration of the creative economy and cultural preservation efforts [3]. The results of a case study in Trusmi Village, Cirebon Regency, show that preserving local wisdom through active community involvement is a key factor in maintaining the sustainability of traditional Mega Mendung batik motifs and techniques, which have been passed down from generation to generation. This strategy not only enhances local cultural identity but also assists in promoting welfare of local artisans as well as making local tourist destinations more attractive for tourists [8]. In other words, not only is it crucial to preserve local cultures by ensuring their authenticity, but it is also important to ensure the existence of social structures that promote the participation of communities in the preservation of cultural identities. A study conducted in the village of Simpang Tolang Lama found that community participation in artistic and traditional activities leads to increased social cohesion and a sense of cultural pride, which in turn strengthens the overall harmony of the community [9].

This research is important to understand how tourism communication plays a role in preserving the Trusmi Batik culture amid the tide of modernization and globalization. Through this study, it is hoped that an understanding can be gained regarding effective communication strategies for maintaining the sustainability of local culture while supporting the development of sustainable tourism in the Batik Trusmi area. This study aims to understand how tourism communication plays a role in the preservation of Batik Trusmi culture, as well as how batik industry stakeholders, tourism managers, and the community collaborate in creating culture-based development strategies for the Batik Trusmi area. This study also aims to identify forms of community participation, cultural communication practices, and efforts to strengthen local identity in the context of creative economic development in the Batik Trusmi Area. Numerous studies on the development of the creative economy and community participation in the culture-based tourism sector have been conducted by various researchers in the past. Cultural tourism plays a vital role in strengthening local identity while boosting the local economy through creative economic activities. This is evident in research findings that indicate that the management of culture-based tourism can serve as both a tourist attraction and a means of preserving traditional values [3]. The Batik Trusmi district serves not only as a center for batik production but also as a space for the Cirebon community to express their local cultural identity through distinctive motifs and batik techniques passed down through generations. Research indicates that Trusmi batik motifs reflect the philosophical values of the local community and serve as a symbol of local identity that distinguishes it from batik from other regions [1]. A study conducted by Farida Nurfalalah, Siti Khumayah, Nurhana Dhea Parlina, and Desi Permatasari, published in the journal *Aksi Kita* under the title "The Potential for Economic Empowerment of the 'Batik Proklam' Community Motif Pengel Through Packaging and Product Design in Larangan Harjamukti Village, Cirebon City" highlights that the results of attractive batik packaging designs in Larangan Harjamukti Village, Cirebon, utilize eco-friendly materials, such as kraft paper, and interesting folding techniques. This is not only intended to protect the batik but also to give the product a premium and valuable impression. This approach can also be applied in the Batik Trusmi District so that tourists can learn about it while simultaneously serving as an innovation for batik practitioners in the Batik Trusmi District. [10]. This study aims to understand how tourism communication contributes to the preservation of Trusmi Batik culture, as well as how batik industry stakeholders, tourism managers, and the community collaborate to develop a culture-based strategy for the Batik Trusmi area. This study also aims to identify forms of community participation, cultural communication practices, and efforts to strengthen local identity in the context of creative economy development in the Batik Trusmi area. Cultural tourism is a type of tourism that makes cultural heritage the main attraction as well as a means of learning for tourists. In this case, tourists not only enjoy the beauty visually but also strive to gain authentic experiences thru interactions with the local community and understanding the values and meanings of the presented culture [11], [12]. In that context, experiences such as witnessing the batik-making process firsthand, communicating with the artisans, and interpreting the philosophy contained in each motif become part of a journey that is symbolic and interpretative [13]. With respect to the theory of the creative economy, culture is considered an asset that can have economic as well as cultural value, whose sustainability is essential. The use of culture as a development resource should be done in a creative manner, without diminishing its cultural meaning [14], [15]. Thus, the creation of batik areas as tourist attractions does not just entail the promotion of their products but the maintenance of their identity as part of culture-based tourism development [16]. In the age of globalization, there is a very vibrant culture exchange

process, which is facilitated by the movement of people, flow of information, and development of the tourism industry. The culture is not constant anymore, but dynamic, and the interpretation of culture is carried out based on the societal and economic dynamics [17], [18]. Therefore, it becomes necessary to develop a communication policy that achieves both the objectives of innovation and conservation at the same time [19]. A study by Nasori[20] emphasized the crucial role of innovation and empowerment in advancing the batik industry. By implementing ecoprint-based batik training for village PKK groups, community members—particularly women—were able to acquire new skills and knowledge, which in turn helped improve their households' economic conditions. Additionally, the use of the ecoprint method demonstrates an adaptation to principles of environmental sustainability that aligns with the development of the creative economy. [20]. The development of cultural heritage-based tourism destinations also emphasizes the importance of planned and participatory management. The success of a destination is largely determined by the involvement of the local community as the key actors who preserve the sustainability of traditions while providing cultural experiences to tourists [21], [22]. This approach aligns with the concept of sustainable tourism development, which integrates economic, social, and cultural aspects into a single regional management system [16], [23]. Cultural tourism requires strong interpretive support and storytelling so that visitors can understand the historical and philosophical significance of a tradition. Telling of stories of cultures through interpersonal communication, demonstrations, and practice is a good way of creating awareness about cultures and their importance [13], [19]. Hence, sustainable tourism places rely on how well they can communicate culture as experience without losing the authenticity of the culture [14], [21], [24]. Research conducted by Satibi[25] shows that local community involvement is the main factor in the success of tourist village development. By actively participating in the planning, management, and promotion processes of the destination, the community is able to build a strong sense of ownership toward their area. This involvement not only enhances the tourist appeal but also provides positive impacts in the form of sustainable economic and social benefits for the local community [25].

The emergence of cultural tourism will not come without the participation of the local community because they hold the heritage that will be offered to the visitors. Community participation plays an important role in the preservation of the culture, while at the same time ensuring the improvement of the quality of the tourism experience [26]. Furthermore, managed attractions such as the cultural aspect, facilities, and security will affect the visitor's satisfaction and make them return [27]. The findings by Vuspitasari[28] suggest that women are strategically involved in supporting the creative economy through local wisdom. Participation by women in the process of developing or innovating local cultural products is important in creating a good impression of tourist spots. It shows that the empowerment of women can be the main contributor to the maintenance of the creative economy in border regions[28]. In order to develop cultural tourism opportunities, there must be harmony among the government, the community, and the local businesses. For instance, with regard to the Batik Trusmi Area, effective communication is one of the factors that can be used to enhance cultural tourism potentials and create an image for the area. Also, it is necessary to involve the community members in activities aimed at conserving and maintaining the batik industry in the area. [3]. This research emphasises the development of the Trusmi Batik District as a cultural tourism destination using the perspective of tourism communication. To produce a structured analysis, this research refers to a number of conceptual variables that serve as the foundation for understanding the phenomena occurring in the field. Cultural-based tourism communication is the process of conveying information, values, and cultural meanings to tourists through direct interaction, storytelling, and experiential tourism. This variable is used to examine how artisans and business actors convey the philosophy of batik, introduce the manufacturing process, and present an educational tourism experience. The term community involvement refers to the participation of the community in the process of tourism activities, either as craft makers, as entrepreneurs, or actors within the creative economy. This indicator is meant to highlight the point that while the community may be an object for tourism, they are also the principal actors involved in the preservation of batik culture. The process of creating cultural tourism zones involves changing batik-making zones into tourism zones with the addition of culture, creative economy, and experience of tourists. Variables such as culture, creative economy, and experience of tourists have been used to study changes in the function of Batik Trusmi as a tourist destination from a cultural perspective. Preserving cultural identity means maintaining the values, meanings, and culture of batik as a vibrant heritage amidst the flow of tourism and modernization. This variable aims to measure the influence of tourism on the long-term sustainability of cultural identity. Therefore, these four variables were analyzed to determine the relationship between cultural potential, tourism communication processes, regional development outcomes, and their impact on the sustainability of cultural identity in Batik Trusmi.

Previous research has not extensively addressed the direct link between tourism communication and cultural preservation, particularly in areas such as Batik Trusmi. Therefore, this study was conducted to fill that gap.

2 Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of tourism communication in supporting cultural preservation and the development of the local creative economy in the Trusmi Batik Area. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply explore the context, meaning, perspectives, and experiences of the research subjects. The data for the study was gathered through in-depth interviews and participant observations conducted among selected key informants who are associated with the tourism industry and creative economy sector, including batik producers, culinary entrepreneurs, tourists, and government officials. The gathered data will then be subjected to analysis using thematic analysis to uncover themes in the qualitative data. Data collection in qualitative studies is conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation to get an overall picture of the social setting under investigation. Interviews are used to further explore the informants' experiences, while observations enable researchers to gain insights into the actual happenings within the research setting [29].

The selection of the informants in this research was made by employing purposive sampling method. It is a technique whereby the identification of the informants is done on the basis of certain predefined criteria. Purposive sampling was selected for use in this research due to the reason that not all the people living in the Batik Trusmi area have information related to tourism communication.

The data analysis process consists of the following stages: transcription, coding, thematic analysis, and interpretation. This process is conducted to ensure that the research findings are valid and reliable.

3 Results and Discussion

Trusmi Batik Industrial Complex is an industrial area where a creative economy based on culture has been developed. The complex is important because it is one of the areas in the conservation of culture identity of Cirebon community. This complex not only functions as the place to produce batik products but also as a social place, as a cultural learning place, and as a place of community discussion. There are many activities in this area, indicating the connection between economic, cultural, and tourism sectors. Trusmi Batik has become a lucrative commodity and method of cross-generational cultural exchange in recent times. The kind of cultural exchange that takes place in this area is spontaneous and involves the process of making batik, the symbolism involved in the designs used, as well as educating the visitors on the same. Put differently, this area is not only an area for batik production, but also culture. The process of production, culture conservation, and tourism promotion is taking place in order to create a culture-oriented industrial zone of Trusmi Batik. Not only production takes place in such zones, but now they have turned into economically productive places where the process of creating cultural products is shown to the society and tourists. These workshops, galleries, and batik stores open to everyone show how commercial activities are related to educating people about the culture. Thus, traditional values are also important in modern commerce. In this context, development would be considered achieved through the preservation of original designs, traditional methods of batik production, and passing on of knowledge from one generation to another. In this way, it is clear that the proposed development would not wipe out the culture of the area. Rather, culture would give the area an edge. The support received would help the area evolve into a dynamic industrial and cultural center. The positive impacts of this transformation can be observed in the thriving economy of the community, consisting of job opportunities, an increased number of small and medium-scale batik firms, and tourism. Besides promoting economic development, this region is also contributing towards safeguarding the cultural legacy of the area by ensuring that batik production continues. Therefore, the creation of the culture-oriented Trusmi Batik industrial sector not only promotes economic development but also maintains a balance between economic development and cultural preservation. The research has found that the development of the Trusmi Batik district depends heavily on the culture-based interaction between the craftspeople, batik entrepreneurs, and economic actors in the region. This exchange takes place not only during transactions but also in the sharing of ideas, values, and culture-related stories among the tourists. The tourists not only engage in buying batik products but also gain a deeper understanding of the philosophy behind Trusmi batik, which is considered an integral part of Cirebon's culture. In this research, the presence of the Trusmi Batik industrial complex is not only regarded as economic growth, but rather regional growth that originates from local culture. The Trusmi Batik can be described as cultural identity conveyed by means of production, communication, and tourism. Therefore, the development of the region is not only viewed from the industrial aspect but also the cultural heritage of significant importance.

Cultural identity is a key part of the Trusmi region's growth. Unique patterns, the use of traditional batik methods, and the passing down of skills from one generation to the next show that the area's industrial activity is closely tied to the community's cultural and historical values. Culture is more than just a symbol, it also helps shape the region's character, giving it a unique personality that sets it apart from other batik centers. For the area to stay sustainable, people in the community need to be involved. People who work in cultural economic activities, such as local artisans, small and medium-sized business owners, and workers, see their work as a way to connect

with their culture and feel responsible for preserving it. So, it's clear that the Trusmi Batik Area is being developed with input from the people who live there. The Trusmi Batik industry, which is based on culture, started with a strong cultural identity for making batik, which is a traditional art form of the Cirebon people. This identity is shown by the different patterns, the use of traditional hand-drawn batik techniques like canting and wax, and the way artisans have passed down the process through generations. These practices show that Trusmi batik is not just a product, but also a way for people to express their culture and share their local knowledge, philosophy, and history. Trusmi has grown into a busy cultural and production center since then. Making batik is now a part of the tourist experience at the batik production site. People who come can see how batik is made, talk to the artists, and find out what each design means. This means that Trusmi is a place for experiential cultural tourism, where people learn about cultural values through real-life activities instead of just stories or narratives. Artisans and the local community act as cultural practitioners and thus have a major part to play in the sustainability of the region. Apart from creating products, artisans and locals preserve their culture through the transmission of knowledge and values to the coming generation and visitors. Therefore, the presence of cultural practitioners in the region indicates the existence of a natural development process driven by intrinsic motivations and not external interventions. In terms of tourism communications, the Trusmi Batik region becomes a medium of cultural communication between cultural heritage and the general population. The interaction between artisans, traders, and tourists serves as a mechanism for exchanging meaning, making batik a part of the region's cultural identity. Tourist activities, exhibitions of the batik-making process, and the spatial arrangement of the sales area serve as communication tools to build Trusmi's image as a culture-based tourism destination.

The growth of this area shows that culture is the most important factor in driving economic growth and the tourism industry. Trusmi has experienced rapid progress not solely due to the process of industrialisation, but also because of its ability to maintain cultural identity while packaging it as a tourist attraction. Thus, culture-based development is able to create a balance between efforts to preserve traditions and the sustainable utilisation of the creative economy.

The development process for Batik Trusmi District to become a cultural tourism site was not instantaneous but rather went through several phases including potentiality, tourism communication process, creativity economic activity results, and the sustainability impact of cultural preservation. In order to conduct an organized assessment of these factors, the following study uses the IPOO model to examine the field research results, thus identifying the link between the potentiality, activities conducted, outcomes obtained, and sustainability impact of the site.

A. Input on Area Development

The local community becomes the main potential as well as the initial capital in the development of the Trusmi Batik Area. From this study, it can be seen that there are many cultural resources that exist in this region, namely the batik making process which has been practiced since many years ago, the existence of artisans who are the main cultural figures, and the Cirebon batik culture which has deep meanings in its philosophy and history. Besides that, the development of this place also benefits from the activities that the people do to generate income in their lives, like opening galleries, souvenirs, and culinary SMEs.

These cultural and social assets serve as the main foundation in the development of the area, as the local community not only plays a role as batik producers but also as guardians and preservers of the regional cultural heritage, which is the main attraction for tourists.

B. The Development Process Through Culture-Based Tourism Communication

The development of the region occurs through tourism communication that is culture-based and direct among the artisans, the business people, and the tourists. The communication happens through face-to-face communication, education of the process of making batik clothes, explanation of the meaning of the designs, and seeing the actual process of making the clothes.

Apart from selling the wares they make, artisans educate visitors on culture as well, leading to an unofficial exchange of culture. Besides, community involvement in tourism initiatives, regional marketing, and batik tourism combined with the local cuisine prove that the growth of this region has been due to teamwork within the community.

In other words, this process involves much more than an economic one; it involves cultural communication processes as well.

C. Outputs of Area Development

This is directly observable as the output from this entire process of development. Studies indicate that the Batik Trusmi District is being considered today as an area for cultural tourism wherein production, learning, and culture can be experienced all at one place through the experience of seeing the making of batik textiles and engaging with the cultural community.

Moreover, the creativity of the community has been enhanced by selling batik products, tourism, and food industries. It should be noted that the area is no longer functioning just as a place of production; rather, it has become a tourist attraction as well.

D. Outcomes of Area Development

The outcomes being discussed here pertain to the effects of regional development with regard to its economic, social, and cultural components. According to the findings presented by the researchers, culture-oriented tourist communication contributes to sustaining the batik culture amid the process of modernization. This is due to the fact that cultural identity is still sustained by the community since it is not only an executor, but also transmitter of culture.

Moreover, the development in this region will also promote the establishment of a community-oriented creative economy, where economic advantages can be gained from tourism without overlooking the traditional culture. Therefore, the Batik Trusmi region becomes a tourism site that is able to offer economic advantages while at the same time maintaining the sustainability of cultural heritage.

From the above explanation based on the input-process-output-outcome model, it can be said that the process of development in the Batik Trusmi District region is successful because it considers cultural potentials, tourism communication, community participation, and attempts to balance commercialization with culture preservation.

3.1 The Role of Culture-Based Tourism Communication in the Preservation and Development of the Batik Trusmi Industry Area

According to the research data, culture-based communication in the Batik Trusmi Industrial Zone has a significant role in maintaining culture identity while at the same time developing the zone as the hub of creative economy and cultural tourism site. Culture communication takes place not only at the transactional stage but also at the level where cultural identity is communicated to tourists and others in their surroundings. This relates to the idea that culture-based tourism development does not only preserve traditions but also strengthens local identity using creative economy within the community.

Cultural tourism communication not only preserves the culture, but it also contributes to the development of the Batik Trusmi region in an environmentally friendly manner. The artisans and business proprietors view themselves as cultural transmitters who educate tourists on making batik and understanding its designs. Such forms of communication make the tourism activity educational and interactive, increasing the interest of tourists in visiting the region and staying longer there. Therefore, tourism communication is not just promotional, but also serves the purpose of cultural preservation and stimulating the creative economy of the region through the creation of a batik industrial region based on culture.



Figure 1. Front Gate of the Batik Trusmi District
Source: Researcher's Data, 2025

The study's results show that culture-based tourism communication in the Trusmi Batik Industrial Area happens when batik artisans and tourists share information and cultural meanings with each other, as explained by Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory. From this perspective, it would be appropriate to point out that Trusmi batik does not just represent a commercial activity but, on the contrary, a form of communication of the culture message to the tourists via face-to-face interactions, historic tales, and philosophies underlying motifs. The communication process makes it possible to share cultural knowledge over time, which helps tourists understand what batik means and how it fits into the Cirebon community's identity. This is in line with Rogers' idea that communication is the main way that people in a social system share their ideas, values, and knowledge [30].

The active participation of local communities in different tourism and creative economy activities also helps to improve culture-based tourism communication in the Trusmi Batik Area. Artisans, batik shop owners, and MSME operators not only serve as implementers of economic activities but also as key actors in the planning, implementation, and utilization of cultural tourism activities. This community involvement reflects the concept of

community participation as articulated by Cohen and Uphoff, who emphasize that the success of community-based development is largely determined by community involvement in decision-making and the implementation of activities. Through such participation, cultural communication in the Batik Trusmi Area proceeds in a participatory and sustainable manner, thereby strengthening the preservation of batik culture while supporting the development of a culture-based batik industry zone [31].

Based on interviews with batik managers and artisans, culture-based tourism communication in the Batik Trusmi Area is carried out through cultural education activities conducted directly with tourists. Cici Lilis, manager of Batik Katura, stated that her team positions itself as a cultural preserver by providing information and education about batik to visitors: "As cultural preservers, our role in information and education is to introduce batik to anyone—especially tourists—who need information about batik itself." The statement implies that the process of communicating does not end with the exchange of goods but goes further to communicate cultural values associated with the Trusmi batik cloth. This can be seen in the case of Gunisa, a batik maker who puts emphasis on knowing the meanings of the motifs especially the Mega Mendung motif. According to her, "We are not just taught how to draw the motifs but more importantly to know their meanings so that the batik takes meaning." The finding thus suggests that cultural communication involves the transmission of cultural values to the tourists and among the generations of batik makers.

In addition to its positive effects on communication, tourism communication within Batik Trusmi district promotes integration between culture, creativity, and gastronomy tourism. According to Bintang Amalia Putri, one of the tourists, the reason she decided to come to Trusmi was related to the idea of watching the process of making batik and communicating with the vendors: "What was most impressive for me is the warmth of the vendors and seeing the batik-making process." As such, the conclusion can be made that social interaction is a crucial element that influences the perception of the district as a destination for cultural tourism. In turn, Doris, an employee at Empal Gentong H. Apud's Batik Market, pointed out that numerous tourists buy products and right after that visit the restaurants of Empal Gentong H. Apud in Batik Trusmi Area creates the image that not only batik culture but also the gastronomic heritage of Cirebon is quite significant." Finally, it should be stated that tourists emphasized facility issues associated with lack of parking places.

3.2 Challenges in Developing the Batik Trusmi Industrial Zone in the Context of Cultural Preservation

Research findings indicate that one of the main challenges in the development of the Batik Trusmi Industrial Zone is the issue of succession among batik artisans. Cici Lilis, manager of Batik Katura, noted that although the zone's development has been relatively strong year after year and public interest in batik remains quite high, the younger generation's interest in participating in batik-making activities is steadily declining. She said, "Year-over-year development has been quite good, and public interest in batik remains strong, but succession remains a problem, as the younger generation's interest in batik has generally been declining." These findings indicate that the sustainability of Trusmi batik cultural preservation faces challenges in the area of human resources, particularly in maintaining the tradition of batik-making passed down through generations.

In addition to the issue of regeneration, the research findings also indicate other challenges in the development of the Batik Trusmi District, particularly regarding product competition and the district's readiness as a cultural tourism destination. The increasing availability of printed batik at more affordable prices has the potential to displace hand-drawn batik as a high-value cultural product if not balanced by adequate education for tourists. On the other hand, the increasing number of tourists has not been fully matched by the readiness of supporting facilities in the area, such as the availability of parking areas and the management of public spaces. These findings indicate that the development of the Trusmi Batik Industrial Area requires a balance between efforts to promote tourism economic growth and preserving cultural values, so that the identity of Trusmi batik remains maintained in the long term.

Research findings related to the challenges in the development of the Trusmi Batik Industrial Area can be analysed through Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory. The lack of interest among the younger generation in the profession of batik artisans indicates that the process of disseminating cultural values and knowledge about batik has not yet been fully accepted by certain social groups, particularly the younger generation as potential successors. Based on what Rogers has mentioned above, the success of diffusion process for cultural values and practices depends heavily on how effective the communication process is, influence of people, and compatibility of innovation with the characteristics of recipients. Speaking about Batik Trusmi, the attempt to maintain batik culture could be seen as an aspect of "cultural value" which must be effectively communicated in order to get acceptance and adoption by the younger generation [30].

The competitive challenges faced in the batik industry and the limited facilities in the area can be analysed using the community participation theory by Cohen and Uphoff. This theory emphasises that the success of community-based development is highly determined by the level of community involvement in the stages of planning, implementation, and utilisation of development results. In the context of the Trusmi Batik Area, the low

understanding of tourists and the suboptimal readiness of infrastructure highlight the importance of strengthening the role of the community and local stakeholders in managing the area. The active involvement of artisans, business actors, and local government in formulating development strategies is an important factor to ensure that tourism growth does not displace cultural values, but rather supports the preservation of batik as a sustainable local identity[31].



Figure 2. Batik Artisans at Batik Katura
Source: Researcher's Data, 2025

Based on interviews with batik artisans, competition between traditional and printed batik is a major obstacle in the development of the Trusmi Batik Industrial Area related to cultural preservation. One artisan, Gunisa, said that tourists prefer cheaper printed batik without understanding its cultural value. According to her, "many tourists cannot distinguish between hand-drawn and printed batik." As a result, hand-drawn batik, which has high philosophical and artistic value, is often underappreciated. This shows that preserving batik culture is not only a production issue, but also a matter of tourists' understanding of the meaning and authenticity of batik as a cultural heritage.

Other than competition in the field of batik industry, the development of Trusmi Batik Area also faces several problems that arise due to the aspect of comfort and tourism area management. One of the tourists who came from the name Bintang Amalia Putri stated that insufficient parking area is one of the problems that make them hesitate to come there. As stated by the tourist, "The parking lot is full and crowded, so it takes a long time to park our vehicle." It is clear from the above statement that despite the increasing number of tourists coming to the area, the readiness of the supporting infrastructure there has not yet increased. This may lead to the reduction in the comfortability of tourists in enjoying their visit at Trusmi Batik area. Therefore, it may be difficult for them to observe the process of making batik fabric since the limited facilities are likely to disturb them during the process.

3.3 The Role of Tourists in Strengthening the Identity of the Batik Trusmi Area as a Cultural Tourism Destination

The findings show that the tourists are actively participating in forming the identity of Batik Trusmi as a cultural site, as they get engaged directly with the batik producers in their visit to the region. As an example, Bintang Amalia Putri described herself as a tourist, explaining that she came here because she had heard of its reputation as a center for batik in Cirebon. She added that "since it is famous as a batik center in Cirebon and I wished to view various batik motifs, in addition to purchasing unique batik in Trusmi." As is evident from the tourists' actions, which include shopping and observing the batik making process, this visit is essential to highlight the cultural significance of Trusmi batik.

In terms of the tourism experience, social interaction involving the tourists themselves and batik makers is important for creating positive perceptions of the region. According to Bintang Amalia Putri, what made the visit unique was the friendly mannerism shown by the vendors and getting to watch the process of making batik. "What was most memorable was the sellers' hospitality and being able to see the batik-making process firsthand," she added. This highlights the fact that tourists are not only consumers who receive services from others, but they are

also constructors of culture through social interaction. With such positive perceptions gained during the visit, there is high possibility that the tourists will encourage other people to visit the Batik Trusmi Area as well.



Figure 3. Tourists are Shopping at Batik Trusmi
Source: Researcher's Data, 2025

The role of tourists in strengthening the identity of the Trusmi Batik Area as a cultural tourism destination can be analysed through Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory. From this perspective, tourists function as recipients and disseminators of Trusmi batik's cultural values through their visits, interactions, and social communication. Tourists are interested in the process of making batik, the ideas behind the designs, and the friendliness of the artisans. This shows that Trusmi batik's cultural values have been successfully communicated and accepted as something special and valuable. These good experiences make tourists want to share stories, advice, and information with each other in person and on social media. This process is in line with Rogers's idea that in a social system, direct experience and talking to other people are the best ways to share ideas and values. Tourists help the Trusmi Batik Area become known as a cultural tourism destination and give it a stronger sense of identity [30].

Additionally, there is the concept of tourist roles that may be defined in light of Cohen and Uphoff's participation in communities theory, which highlights the need for active involvement of different stakeholders in promoting sustainable development. For cultural tourism, besides the tourists being consumers, they are also part of the tourism chain that ensures sustainability of the location. This participation can be seen in the positive attitudes displayed towards the local culture, education, as well as purchasing of the batik traditional goods. Through the appreciation of the batik culture process by the tourists, there will be encouragement on the local stakeholders to continue sustaining the culture. Thus, the interaction between tourists and the local community forms a participatory relationship that strengthens each other, where tourists also play a role in reinforcing the identity and sustainability of the Trusmi Batik Area as a cultural tourism destination [31].

According to the results of the interview, the contribution of tourists in supporting the identity of Batik Trusmi District is reflected in the motivations and behaviors of the tourists, which are based on culture. According to Bintang Amalia Putri, a tourist who visited Trusmi, the main motivation for visiting this place was to witness the cultural heritage of Cirebon batik directly. The tourist said, "As it is well-known as the center of batik in Cirebon, my motivation was to witness the diversity of motifs and purchase the unique batik from the Trusmi region." Besides shopping, the tourist also revealed that she had witnessed the process of making batik as well as the food served in this region. It means that tourists consider Batik Trusmi District as a cultural tourism destination that provides a complete experience rather than an economic one.

The involvement of tourists can be observed through the emotional experiences and perceptions created by them through the trip itself. As mentioned by Bintang Amalia Putri, the most memorable part of his visit to the Batik Trusmi District was interacting with the batik craftsmen. In other words, "What impressed me most was how warm-hearted the sellers were and having the chance to observe the batik making process directly." Hence, it is clear from the interview results that personal interaction between tourists and batik sellers is an important step in creating a positive image of the location. Such positive perceptions may be used by tourists to inform others about the place visited by them, which in turn will make them become ambassadors for its identity. In sum, from the analysis of the interviews, it follows that tourists function both as visitors and participants who help to build up the identity of the area.

3.4 The Role of Culinary SMEs in Supporting the Cultural Tourism Ecosystem in the Batik Trusmi Area

Research findings indicate that MSMEs in the culinary sector play an important role in supporting the cultural tourism ecosystem in the Trusmi Batik District. Doris, one of the employees at the Empal Gentong H. Apud branch located in the Batik Market, stated that Cirebon's traditional cuisine has become one of the main destinations for tourists after shopping for batik. She added that "most visitors who had bought batik usually stopped over to try

out the traditional food of Cirebon.” This means that the culinary activity has already become part and parcel of the tourism experience in the area of Trusmi. The existence of culinary SMEs does not only serve the purpose of satisfying the demand of the visitors, but it also helps in improving the image of the area as a cultural tourism destination.

Besides improving the quality of the tourism experience, culinary SMEs are also able to promote the local economy and ensure the authenticity of culinary culture. According to Doris, despite the increasing number of visitors, the enterprise did not change the original taste of empal gentong for tourists to feel its distinctive flavor. In particular, she stated, “We have not changed the original taste because tourists generally want to enjoy the original taste.” However, the increasing number of tourists necessitated changes in terms of the improvement of services like the acceleration of the food serving process and the creation of spaces where visitors could sit. Thus, according to the results of the research, the SMEs act as an auxiliary sector whose primary objective is not economic but the preservation of local culture.



Figure 4. H. Apud's Empal Gentong Restaurant, Batik Market Branch
Source : Researcher's Data, 2025

The role of culinary SMEs in supporting the cultural tourism ecosystem in the Batik Trusmi area can be analysed through Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory. Traditional Cirebon cuisine not only serves to meet the needs of tourists but also acts as a medium to convey local identity and cultural values. When tourists enjoy traditional dishes after visiting the batik area, a comprehensive process of cultural experience dissemination occurs. Rogers emphasises that the delivery of values and meanings will be more effective when conducted through direct experiences and social interactions. Therefore, the presence of culinary SMEs also expands cultural communication channels while strengthening the image of the Trusmi Batik Area as an integrated cultural tourism destination [30].

Additionally, the inclusion of culinary SMEs in the Trusmi area is also consistent with the concept of community participation put forth by Cohen and Uphoff. Participation of the stakeholders in culinary tourism shows that the development of the area is not only limited to the main sector of batik production but also includes the supporting sectors, which comprise the community itself. The inclusion of the community elements in the development process of this area is evident from the participation of culinary SMEs in harnessing the economic potential offered by the tourists through sustaining the sustainability of culinary culture in the region [31].

The existence of culinary MSMEs in the Batik Trusmi area can be seen as a symbiosis between the two sectors of cultural tourism development. Culinary events become complementary experiences for tourists when they visit the batik place. The combination of both types of tourism contributes to the economy and makes the batik place attractive as a tourist destination not only in terms of their cultural offerings but also in the overall experience. Therefore, culinary SMEs become crucial in sustaining tourism in the Batik Trusmi area.

That role is also evident from the impact of the increased crowds in the batik area on the activities of culinary SMEs. Doris, an employee at the Empal Gentong H. Apud branch located in the Batik Market, revealed that the increase in the number of tourists visiting the batik area directly affects the number of visitors at local eateries. She stated that "when the batik area is crowded, the eateries also get busy because tourists usually look for local cuisine after shopping for batik." This statement shows a strong interdependent relationship between the batik and culinary sectors in shaping a cultural tourism ecosystem. This condition affirms that culinary SMEs function as a supporting sector that strengthens overall tourism activities, while also maintaining the continuity of economic and cultural dynamics in the Batik Trusmi area.

4 Conclusion

The development of the Trusmi Batik Industrial Park shows that success of a tourist attraction that utilizes culture is not dependent on the potential that can be derived from its products or economy alone, but more importantly on the capability of the community to communicate culture as a lifestyle that is continuously

transmitted to others. Batik in Trusmi does not only serve as an object of commerce, but as a vehicle of cultural communication where cultural value, philosophy, and even identity are conveyed.

In this study, it was found out that the culture-based tourism communication plays a mediating role in the balancing act between culture preservation and the adaptation to modernity. This is done through interaction, batik-making sessions, and storytelling, which leads to transformation from the process of production into a cultural experience. In this sense, therefore, it can be said that tourism in Trusmi does not rely on commercialization that destroys the cultural heritage of Trusmi, but rather on the redefinition of culture.

But this dynamic also shows the tension between trying to keep cultural authenticity and meeting modern market needs. The area has a lot of problems, such as bringing back artisans, the rise of printed batik, and changes in the economy. This means that the area's long-term health depends on more than just the growth of the tourism industry. It also depends on the community's ability to keep cultural values as a basis for growth. If culture is just symbols and not real ways of passing things down, the area could lose its identity as a living cultural space. The Trusmi Batik area is especially strong because the people there actively practice and share their culture. The community not only has an economic role in their daily lives, but they also help to protect the environment. As this development model demonstrates, the sustainability of cultural tourism destinations can only be achieved if the elements of cultural preservation, economics, and communication work together, rather than replacing each other. Batik Trusmi culture-based development can be described as culture-based development, which is generally the kind of development carried out by a community due to their realization that culture is the source through which they can realize the benefits of tourism, while at the same time preserving their cultural identity despite globalization.

This study shows that tourism communication plays a vital role in supporting cultural preservation and the development of the creative economy. Through effective and participatory communication, cultural values can be preserved and showcased to the general public.

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