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Indonesian Tourism and Batik: An Online Map

Indonesian tourism has been promoting extensively the country's heritage, be it tangible or intangible. In particular, Batik hand-drawn tradition is featured as a major attraction, encompassing materials and production techniques, motifs, fashion and wearing rules, as well as its philosophic and spiritual roots. Batik has been, additionally, enlisted in 2009 among the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list, providing a further opportunity for Indonesian tourism to leverage on this. An extensive research, covering both the Indonesian and the English languages, so to cater for domestic and international travelers, has been performed online in order to unveil the role played by Batik within the tourism-related online narratives. Such research has considered the main actors (be they national or international ones), as well as the most frequent types of contents and viewpoints on the Batik online tourism-related world of meaning. While a clear role of Batik as part of Indonesia-related tourism narratives is depicted, the research shows that most of the values stressed by UNESCO are only seldom covered and that there is room for improvement when it comes to providing a deeper understanding of Batik to domestic and international travelers.

Key words: ICT, online presence, Batik intangible cultural heritage

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Introduction

Indonesian Batik is a textile hand-drawn applying hot-melted wax and natural dyes with intricate patterns designed in accordance with cultural and philosophical meanings. Batik was inscribed in the List of UNESCO intangible heritage of humanity in 2009 for its Outstanding Universal Values: (i) its special craftsmanship elements, (ii) philosophical values contained in its motifs, and (iii) rich social-cultural norms characterized in (iv) its wearing rules (UNESCO, 2009). Batik has existed as fashion heritage since the Hindu Buddhist era (7th-8th Century) in Indonesian Archipelago. Batik has intrinsic semiotic and symbolic meanings, sacred motifs are to be used by particular people and in specific events (king, weddings, state occasions, funerals, etc.) (Yunus & Tulasi, 2012). Nowadays, Batik has been adapted and widely used as daily dress of Javanese people as traditional costumes and modern ready-to-wear clothing (Hitchcock & Nuryanti, 2000, p.35).



Figure 1. Batik Hand-painting Textile of Madura, Indonesia

After almost one decade of UNESCO inscription in 2009, Indonesian government decided to promote Batik as a valuable textile for souvenirs and fashion products as part of cultural tourism attraction (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2011). The Indonesian government also encourages all related Batik stakeholders – including the tourism ones – to provide information through digital platforms in order to promote Batik products (Ministry of State-owned Enterprises, 2017). That phenomenon has given rise to several questions when it comes to safeguarding the original meaning of Batik: *to what extent has Indonesian Batik been shaped (and potentially misinterpreted) through tourism narratives?* In order to understand

Batik and its implication in the tourism domain, we need to analyse how Batik is dealt with online by different tourism-related information providers after its inscription. This study is intended (i) to explore the differences between online sources (webpages) covering batik and tourism in Indonesian and in English languages based on the online communication model, (ii) to draw a reflection on the conformity of such tourism-related online narratives with the goals of the UNESCO inscription. The result shows that Batik has been strongly integrated into tourism as cultural attraction, and remained as fashion commodity enjoyed by both Indonesian people and global consumers. There is also significant support from various stakeholders to encourage the batik producers through diverse initiatives. Moreover, a reflection on the conformity of such tourism-related online narratives with the goals of the UNESCO inscription will be presented.

Literature review

ICTs, tourism and intangible heritage

The eTourism plays a major role at all levels in tourism industry, ranging from the individual one, industry, up to the level of governance and policy-making (Kalbaska et al., 2017). In order to foster sustainable tourism (UNEP & UNWTO, 2005), the United Nations have highlighted the three main sustainability layers: economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability (UNWTO, 2018). ICTs can help to communicate cultural heritage, as it is indicated both in UNESCO's 1972 Convention on the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage as well as in the UNESCO's 2003 Convention on Intangible Heritage. Linking the three aspects of sustainable tourism, heritage, and ICTs, one can single out five main areas of intervention (Cantoni, 2018): (i) Access of quality information; (ii) Better the experience once at the destination; (iii) Connect the three main players: heritage, locals, and visitors; (iv) Dis-intermediate some relationships, so to ensure that local communities can benefit from tourism-related economy; and (v) Education, which includes also the training of tourism

players. In order to capture information flow of Batik in online tourism domain, the analysis of the present study adopts the Online Communication Model (Cantoni & Tardini, 2006), focusing on the 1st pillar (the content and functionalities) and the 2nd pillar (accessibility tools and type of publication outlets).

ICTs, Batik textile, and tourism

Various Batik stakeholders use ICT to harmonize and coordinate the activities of local stakeholders, to connect with travelers, communicate their tourism and cultural assets (e.g., Batik), as well as build destination brand communication strategies (Fernandez-Cavia et al., 2017). They integrate tourism services, with e-commerce and other relevant information in order to connect users with the relevant stakeholders (Fesenmaier & Xiang, 2013). In addition, DMO websites are mostly designed in a way that represents the region and convey the spirit of the place, and its intangible values (Fernandez-Cavia et al., 2014), and differentiate their destination image as tourism attractions from others (Blain et al., 2005). In 2014, the Indonesian government improved its eTourism by building a B2B platform, with the aim to link all tourism service providers with online travel agents (Nugraheni et al., 2018). Thanks to the significant growth of internet users (Kemp, 2017)¹ which support the eTourism initiative, Indonesia achieved its target of increasing tourism visits by 14.04 million of international tourists, and more than 252 million domestic tourists in 2017. These figures suggest that an analysis of the relationship between Batik intangible heritage and tourism, when it comes to online communication, is not only possible considering international tourism, but also – if not first of all – considering the domestic one. The existing scientific works on the online presence of Intangible Cultural Heritage and tourism, have been conducted, such as in the case of Indian sari (Khanwalkar, 2018), and other related online presence researches (Khalid & Chowdhury,

¹ In 2017, the internet users of Indonesia reached 51% of its population or 132.7 million people; social media users became 40% or 106 million users,

2016; Severo & Venturini, 2016; Piñeiro-Naval et al., 2018; Garbelli et al, 2017). The study on Batik and Indonesian tourism is intended to give a scientific contribution about Batik, as Indonesian intangible cultural heritage, and its viewpoints in online tourism domain.

Methodology

The research was conducted from January to May 2018 and has covered 200 websites: 100 in the Indonesian language and 100 in the English one. By doing so, the study aims at observing the emerging issues around Batik in online tourism domain by analyzing the difference between the coverage in the two languages: one aimed at a domestic audience, while the other at an international one. The research implements a bottom-up methodology (Lizzi et al., 2011). The bottom-up approach is a way to analyze data collected from the grassroots, in this case, web pages covering Batik and tourism found through the Google Search Engine were set as the object of the research. According to Chi (1997), such an approach also gives a space for more discovery, experimentation, and a better feeling to capture the needs at the bottom level. This research aims to answer two main research questions: (i) How can tourism-related Batik online narratives be mapped? In particular, according to their: (a) type of publication outlets, (b) formats used (information displayed in forms of text, image, video), (c) locations, (d) content of textual information (e.g: Batik Outstanding Universal Values; Batik production; Stakeholders; Usage Values; and Cultural Tourism). (ii) Are the online tourism narratives related to Batik in line with the key-points of the UNESCO inscription?

This research adopts quantitative and qualitative methods in order to investigate the presence of a given type of content in a given set of websites/webpages (Cantoni et al., 2007). The sample has been collected by searching for the keywords: 'Tourism,' 'and,' 'Batik.' Those queries are used altogether in the Google search engine, retrieved the first 100 relevant results, reachable through the first 17 results' pages; the same has been done for the Indonesian language, searching for 'Pariwisata', 'dan', 'Batik' (18 results' pages had to be retrieved in

order to collect 100 relevant results). In determining the web samples, only webpages providing tourism information have been included in the sample, excluding results from scientific papers (e.g., Google Scholar), advertisements, as well as webpages referring to other countries (e.g., the Caribbean, Ghana, India, Malaysia, etc.). We did not specify ‘Indonesian’ in the queries, to check possible online presence about Batik also in other countries. The main indicators were built based on the Online Communication Model, the universal values according to UNESCO inscription text of Batik in 2009, and the three layers of sustainable tourism of UNWTO 2018: economic, environmental, and socio-cultural sustainability (see Figure 2). Additional indicators were defined iteratively until saturation. When any new type of content was found, it was added to the table of indicators, and the samples were re-analysed. The process of assessing and classifying each website/page to fill-in relevant indicator(s) adopts a qualitative content analysis, performed by a human coder. The quantitative method was used in the process of exploring and annotating the contents based on the given indicators. This was done by assigning grid value of “1” and “0”. The value “1” is given when the indicator is present in the web samples, and “0” when the indicator is absent.

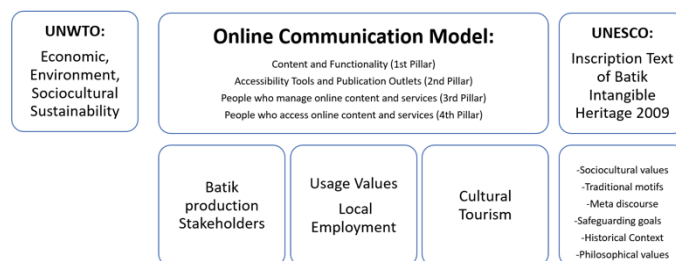


Figure 2. Main Categories of Content Analysis

Results

The two most frequent types of publication items covering Batik and Tourism in the Indonesian language are ‘News and Media’ (46%), ‘DMO/Tourism Bureau’ (27%) and ‘Research Center and Museum’ (5%). The high presence of ‘DMO/Tourism bureau’ webpages illustrates their active role in producing articles about Batik as a distinguished local product, associated with cultural tourism attractions in the regions. In terms of English web pages, the

presence of main player covering Batik and tourism is distributed more evenly among seven different actors: ‘News and Media’ (25%), ‘Blogs’ (12%), ‘DMO/Tourism Bureau’ (10%), ‘Online Travel Reviews’ (9%), ‘Travel Agents and Tour Operator’ (9%), ‘Travel guides’ (8%), ‘Tourism Related Info (Hotel, Flight)’ (8%). The searched Indonesian and English web pages mostly use visual formats (English 72%; Indonesian 85%), and some with additional videos (see Table 1). The research also indicates that Indonesia as general location of Batik products and there are also 44 particular locations: cities and regions across Indonesian archipelago as the origin of Batik textiles (Indonesian 84%; English 79%). It signifies that there is a growing number of new Batik regions, locates in Java and other islands, which are covered and promoted online by different stakeholders.

Table 1: Type of Publication Outlets, Formats, and Location

| Indicators | English | Indonesian | Indicators | English | Indonesian |
|---|---------|------------|--|---------|------------|
| A. Type of Publication Outlets | | | B. Formats | | |
| First Outlets | | | Pictures | | |
| News and Media | 25% | 46% | No Batik Picture | 27% | 13% |
| DMO/Tourism Bureau | 10% | 27% | With Batik Picture | 72% | 85% |
| Blogs | 12% | 3% | Videos | | |
| Secondary Outlets | | | No Batik Video | 93% | 94% |
| Travel Agents | 9% | 2% | Full Batik Production Video | 3% | 2% |
| Online Travel Reviews | 9% | 1% | Batik Fashion Show, Tourism related Video | 4% | 2% |
| Travel Guides | 8% | 1% | C. Locations | | |
| Tourism Related Info (hotel, flight) | 8% | 3% | Common Location | 21% | 16% |
| Research centre and museum | 6% | 5% | <i>(Indicating Indonesia as general origin)</i> | | |
| Third Outlets | | | Particular Locations | 79% | 84% |
| Indonesian government bodies | 4% | 3% | <i>(indicating certain cities in Indonesia as the origin of Batik)</i> | | |
| Social Media | 3% | 3% | | | |
| Batik Companies (SMEs, Batik Fashion House) | 3% | 3% | | | |

The emergence of printed Batik textiles leads to some problems at the tourism destinations, since such fabrics are considered “fake Batik,” and are produced by printing

machines. Consequently, many tourists get trapped by malicious sellers and fall into buying the fake ones with expensive costs. The study also noted that there is a number of online articles covering how to distinguish the original Batik from the fake ones and tips to avoid the trap of fake Batik at the destination (see Table 2). These contents are mostly written in online travel review, blogs, travel guides by experienced online users or travel guides. Both English and Indonesian webpages recognize also the high presence of Indonesian non-governmental support, which refers to all initiatives done by individuals and local communities to valorise Batik intangible heritage by means of creating workshops, providing tours and other Batik related activities (see Table 2).

Table 2: Contents of Textual Information

| Indicators | English | Indonesian | Indicators | English | Indonesian |
|--|---------|------------|--|---------|------------|
| A. Outstanding Universal Values | | | D. Batik Usage Values | | |
| Sociocultural values (Rituals, wearing rules, intergeneration,) | 34% | 20% | Tourism attraction | 88% | 90% |
| Traditional motifs | 29% | 44% | Exhibition and Fashion Show | 14% | 26% |
| Meta discourse (motifs of animal, and nature) | 22% | 32% | Batik retails | 11% | 9% |
| Safeguarding goals | 22% | 30% | Seminar and Conference | 8% | 7% |
| Historical Context | 21% | 24% | Supporting industry in Tourism (e.g: interior design, amenities production, co-branding with tourism) | 7% | 6% |
| Philosophical values | 17% | 25% | E. Local Employment | | |
| B. Batik Productions | | | Batik producers | 47% | 59% |
| Fabric materials | 71% | 59% | Youth engagement | 12% | 23% |
| Other type of Material (wood, leather) | 15% | 16% | Marginalized people (disability, prisoners) | 0 | 1% |
| Original Batik (Hand-painting, stamp) | 62% | 51% | F. Cultural Tourism | | |
| Technical aspect (natural dye, tools, tailors) | 57% | 36% | Batik centre | 52% | 59% |
| Fake Batik (printed textiles) | 17% | 10% | Batik tours | 54% | 29% |
| Ecological value | 5% | 2% | Workshop for tourists | 34% | 20% |
| C. Stakeholders | | | Tourist experience | 30% | 10% |
| Indonesian (person, community) | 83% | 74% | Workshop for locals | 17% | 17% |
| Indonesian government | 38% | 80% | Batik museum | 9% | 5% |
| International (governments, agencies, tourists) | 60% | 21% | | | |

Conformity with UNESCO inscription

The goal of this study is to analyse how far the Batik intrinsic universal values and its safeguarding goals based on the UNESCO inscription text in 2009, are explicitly included in tourism narratives. From the analysis, we can conclude that Batik cultural values that are most emphasized by UNESCO – namely ‘Socio-cultural values,’ ‘Philosophical Values,’ ‘Historical Context,’ ‘Safeguarding Goals,’ and ‘Type of Traditional Motifs’ – are still underrepresented in both Indonesian and English webpages. Hereafter the details.

Indonesian webpages present higher results when it comes to communicating Batik intrinsic values compared to English ones. The highest results of Indonesian webpages are Traditional Motifs (44%), and Meta-discourse of Batik (32%). English webpages emphasize more on Socio-cultural values (34%, Indonesian result: 20%). With regards to ‘Safeguarding goals’ category, Indonesian samples show a higher result of 30%; while English web pages present slightly fewer contents (22%) that contain an explicit statement of safeguarding goals in the online tourism narratives.

Conclusions

Indonesian Batik, as UNESCO intangible cultural heritage, has evolved not only as a fashion heritage but also to become a major tourism attraction. Such a relationship is clearly seen in the sketched map of its online presence. The traditional notion of Batik, which was merely limited to its production and philosophical values, has evolved. Nowadays Batik is gradually regarded as a strong asset for local people also in order to develop domestic and international tourism. However, seeing these huge improvements of Batik usage values, we need to reflect also on the essentials of Batik for fear that it might lose its intrinsic, outstanding universal values as a cultural heritage of humanity, as acknowledged through the 2009 UNESCO inscription. This study has contributed to map the main online narratives about Batik and tourism, as well as to pinpoint some gaps when it comes to safeguarding goals stressed by

the UNESCO inscription. It suggests the tourism-related stakeholders to pay attention and improve the quality of the information when it comes to communicating Batik to the domestic and international travellers. Further studies are required in order to find suitable strategies to better promote and disseminate the values of Batik as intangible heritage without overexploiting its usage values in tourism and fashion industry.

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