

## IWATIK BATIK: EMPOWERING WOMEN AND CULTURAL IDENTITY OF BALIKPAPAN CITY

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Keywords	Abstract
<p>Balikpapan City Batik Cultural Identity Women Empowerment</p>	<p><i>IWATIK is an organization founded by empowered women in Balikpapan City to enhance batik art abilities while encouraging the advancement of arts and culture in Mekarsari, a ward of Balikpapan City. This research examines the cultural identity embedded in IWATIK batik art and analyses potential implications for women's empowerment and local community development. This research used a qualitative method. The data collection methods were in-depth interviews and observation with IWATIK members. The technique used in this research was inductive analysis. The results show that Preserving Balikpapan batik is a measure taken to protect the cultural heritage of Balikpapan City. Batik serves not only as a traditional textile but also as a means for presenting the cultural identity of Balikpapan City, a very multicultural area with abundant natural resources. Furthermore, in IWATIK, women's participation in strategic decision-making, including goal formulation and team management, fosters an inclusive and competitive environment.</i></p>
<p><b>Corresponding Author</b> Romiana Universitas Airlangga Indonesia <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:romiana-2023@fib.unair.ac.id">romiana-2023@fib.unair.ac.id</a> <b>Phone:</b> 081357500065</p>	<p><b>Abstrak</b> <i>Batik merupakan identitas budaya yang diperkenalkan oleh Pemerintah Kota Balikpapan sebagai produk khas kota ini. Hal ini dilakukan sehubungan dengan semakin meningkatnya pembangunan di Kota Balikpapan yang merupakan kota multikultural yang saat ini juga menjadi kota penyangga ibu kota negara baru, Nusantara. IWATIK merupakan organisasi yang didirikan oleh perempuan-perempuan berdaya di Kota Balikpapan untuk meningkatkan kemampuan seni membatik sekaligus mendorong kemajuan seni dan budaya di Mekarsari, salah satu kelurahan Kota Balikpapan. Penelitian ini mengkaji identitas budaya yang tertanam dalam seni batik IWATIK dan menganalisis potensi implikasinya terhadap pemberdayaan perempuan dan pengembangan masyarakat lokal. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah wawancara mendalam dan observasi terhadap anggota IWATIK. Teknik yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah analisis induktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Melestarikan batik Balikpapan merupakan upaya yang dilakukan</i></p>

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*untuk menjaga warisan budaya Kota Balikpapan. Batik tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai tekstil tradisional tetapi juga sebagai sarana menampilkan identitas budaya Kota Balikpapan, daerah yang sangat multikultural dengan sumber daya alam yang melimpah. Selain itu, di IWATIK, partisipasi perempuan dalam pengambilan keputusan strategis, termasuk perumusan tujuan dan manajemen tim, menumbuhkan lingkungan yang inklusif dan kompetitif.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The future outlook for Balikpapan City to evolve into an advanced and renowned city is becoming more favorable. It is attributed to Balikpapan City's role as the buffer zone in relocating the Republic of Indonesia's capital from DKI Jakarta to Penajam Paser Utara Regency, East Kalimantan. The pivotal role of Balikpapan City in national development provides a substantial opportunity to introduce the culture of Balikpapan City on a broader scale. Balikpapan City is recognized as a city with a diverse cultural landscape, attributed to its composition of various ethnic groups. The city is recognized for its diverse and multicultural population, comprising people from multiple ethnic backgrounds and races (Mutmainnah et al., 2014). This phenomenon can be traced back to Balikpapan City's history, particularly in the early 20th century, when the discovery and drilling of oil in Balikpapan attracted a significant influx of migrants to the city (Balikpapan City Government, 2011). Over time, Balikpapan City is continuously transforming into a rapidly developing and modern city marked by cultural diversity within its borders. Currently, the city hosts an increasingly diverse population of newcomers, establishing Balikpapan as a city with a heterogeneous society comprised of various ethnicities, tribes, and cultures. The dominant ethnic groups include Javanese, Banjar, Bugis, Madurese, and others such as Batak, Buton, Sundanese, and Ambonese (Mutmainnah et al., 2014). Despite these differences, the inhabitants of Balikpapan City coexist peacefully and harmoniously within a unified community.

The Balikpapan City Government is committed to leveraging cultural variety to enhance Balikpapan City's role as the buffer zone as the new national capital (Cahyanti, 2023). Various cultural products of Balikpapan City continue to be developed and are expected to be a representation of Balikpapan City culture, one of which is through Batik. Since being designated by UNESCO as Indonesia's intangible heritage in 2009, Batik has become a cultural symbol that continues to be enhanced in several places in Indonesia, including Balikpapan City. Batik emerges as one of the cultural products that serves as the cultural identity of Balikpapan City. However, the attempts to present Balikpapan City's cultural identity through Batik have involved an extensive process. Its development differs significantly from Java's Batik. Balikpapan Batik was established in 1991 and initiated by the local government through the Office of Cooperatives, MSMEs, and Industry, contrasting the majority of Batik in Java. At that time, of the various programs offered by the government, batik art became one of the programs of interest to the local artisans and was eventually developed (Perindustrian, 2016)—one of the batik makers who continues to produce Batik in Balikpapan City until nowadays is IWATIK.

IWATIK is the acronym of *Ikatan Wanita Pembatik*, or the association of women batik artisans. IWATIK is an organization founded by empowered women in Balikpapan City to enhance batik art abilities while encouraging the advancement of arts and culture in Mekarsari, a ward of Balikpapan City. IWATIK was established in 2017 by a group of women with a mutual enthusiasm for the art of Batik. Mrs. Sunarsih, a resident of the Mekarsari subdistrict, participated in batik training from the Mekarsari sub-district office program, leading to the formation of the Women Batik Association. IWATIK is an organization that originated as a women's empowerment program and currently

operates in the batik industry with twelve members. They are motivated to both appreciate and actively contribute to preserving the tradition of batik art. IWATIK was established as a forum batik makers in the Mekarsari Village area used to improve their batik skills, sell their batik products, and preserve and promote local Batik in Balikpapan City.

Previous studies have been conducted to analyze the relationship between Batik, cultural identity, women's empowerment, and its influence on the family economy. The research conducted by Syakir et al. (2022) found that batik motifs can be a tool to represent a city's cultural identity, such as the example of Semarang sour batik, which has a historical connection to the city of Semarang. It is also in line with research conducted by Zuhro et al. (2020), who found that Batik is also a form of cultural representation of a region. Furthermore, research related to women's empowerment in the batik industry conducted by Albar and Damayanti (2021) found that the women's batik craftsmen group can empower women artisans to increase family income and support the improvement of the local economy because of the increasing number of employment opportunities obtained. It is also in line with research conducted by Gunawan et al., (2022) about the role of batik MSMEs in Indonesia, which can empower its craftsmen and provide an increase in family economic income. Furthermore, Sulaiman et al. (2022) stated that many aspects affect the financial stability, cultural preservation, and sustainability of the batik industry, namely creativity, promotion, and also regulations that conserve the art of Batik so that it is maintained.

The previous research provides a basis for understanding the phenomenon and methodology that can be applied in this research. However, this research provides a novel contribution by focusing specifically on the case of IWATIK as an agent for women's empowerment and its effects on arts, culture, and economics in Balikpapan City, despite earlier studies on similar issues. This research examines the cultural identity embedded in IWATIK batik art and analyses potential implications for women's empowerment and local community development. Furthermore, this research will use the circuit of culture theory proposed by Stuart Hall. This research contributes to women's empowerment through IWATIK batik art and plays a significant role in preserving Balikpapan's distinctive arts and culture. The analysis of batik art as a cultural expression enriches understanding and provides valuable information for policymakers in designing cultural and women empowerment programs. In addition, this research aims to increase the positive publicity of IWATIK and Balikpapan batik art; this research has the potential to expand the market and strengthen the recognition of local art heritage.

## **METHOD**

This research uses a qualitative method focusing on an in-depth understanding of the objectives. This research was conducted in Balikpapan, East Borneo. The data collection techniques were in-depth interviews with IWATIK members, observation, and literature research. In-depth interviews were conducted with three key individuals: the owner and two members of IWATIK. These participants were selected because of their comprehensive knowledge of IWATIK's development and the batik-making process. Their selection was to ensure that the data was gathered from individuals deeply involved in all development processes. The in-depth interviews were used to gain an in-depth understanding of the perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of IWATIK members regarding the cultural values contained in IWATIK's Batik to find out the representation and cultural identity displayed in each piece of IWATIK batik, how the production process is carried out, as well as matters relating to policies that have an impact on the production and consumption processes experienced by this organization. The observation was conducted in their production, sales, and the training program obtained by IWATIK. The observation was conducted over three months to capture the

day-to-day operations of IWATIK. Furthermore, the observation of the production of the Batik, the interactions among the members, the selling process of batik products, and the training program obtained by IWATIK. The observation provided a nuanced understanding of women's empowerment in the batik process as well as their cultural identity. In addition, the research also conducted research of supporting literature.

The technique used in this research was inductive analysis. This research uses a circuit of culture theory to analyze the data. The circuit of culture offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing the complexities of cultural practices, representations, identities, and power dynamics within society. This model comprises five interconnected components: representation, identity, production, consumption, and regulation. Each of these elements involves the production of articulated meaning in forming cultural phenomena, particularly batik art, which reflects the complex interactions between social circumstances and cultural expressions (Barker & Jane, 2016). In the context of batik art, the circuit of culture can be used to comprehend how batik motifs and designs convey cultural identities and contribute to constructing individual and community identities (Kari et al., 2019). Furthermore, batik production combines traditional methods with contemporary practices representing local values and traditions (Supana, 2019). Therefore, the production also gives cultural value to Batik. In addition, the consumption of batik items helps to perpetuate cultural practices and influences the evolution of creative expressions and cultural meanings (Justian & Taufik, 2019). Furthermore, production, consumption, and preservation regulations are critical in ensuring its cultural legacy and economic survival (Sulaiman et al., 2022).

In addition, this research focuses mainly on all the motifs produced by IWATIK in general. Furthermore, in examining production and consumption, this research considers the influence of certain regulations that affect the economic aspects and women empowerment of this IWATIK organization. Therefore, examining batik art through the cultural circuits allows researchers to examine how cultural practices, artistic expression, economic activities, and social norms dynamically interact in the production and consumption of batik IWATIK.

## **RESULT**

### ***Representation of Cultural Identity in IWATIK's Batik***




The importance of identity for a city impacts city branding, the preservation of culture, economic development, and the city's representation both within the country and internationally (Lestari et al., 2020). Establishing a city's identity encompasses various factors, including tourism, the creative economy, and cultural sectors, significantly shaping the city's overall character (Syahrir & Pramono, 2021). Thus, the Balikpapan City administration prioritizes the creative economy and small and medium companies (SMEs) as a strategic approach to constructing local identity. This program seeks to maximize and harness the cultural potential of Balikpapan City, with a particular focus on the development and promotion of Batik. This cultural product is continuously being cultivated and endorsed by the Balikpapan City government. Based on statistics from the Balikpapan City Trade Office, Batik Balikpapan is currently being prioritized by the local government for further development to enhance its marketability.

Balikpapan batik emerges as part of the East Kalimantan Batik type, which is intrinsically connected to the history of Batik in Kalimantan. Putri Junjung Buih's request to *Patih* Lambung Mangkurat to dye woven and *calap* cloth within one day as a requirement for her marriage indicated the beginning of Kalimantan batik (Ratnadewi, 2023). Furthermore, Kalimantan batik has developed in recognition, with a wide range of designs distinguished by firm shapes and vibrant colors. The batik design in East Kalimantan is inspired by the Dayak tribe's varied traditions and the nearby flora and wildlife (Rosita et al., 2023). Therefore, traditional East Kalimantan motifs have become

inseparable from Balikpapan batik. It is the foundation for all batik artisans in Balikpapan City to determine the design of the batik motifs they create.

The batik motif designs crafted by IWATIK encompass many symbolic meanings, from traditional depictions of local plants and animals to symbolic representations of cultural symbols. The Batik produced is influenced by the abundant flora seen in Balikpapan City. Balikpapan City is home to a tropical forest that boasts diverse natural vegetation. The plants that serve as inspiration for creating batik motifs include *Lempuyang* plants, thatch leaves, water hyacinths, cypress trees, fern leaves, bamboo trees, *kelubut* plants, and others. All of these inspirations come from their observations of the natural resources in Balikpapan City.

**Table 1. Some Examples of IWATIK's Batik Motif Design**

No.	Picture of Motifs	Motifs
1		Motifs inspired by the water hyacinth plant
2		A fern-inspired motif
3		Motifs inspired by thatch plants

Although IWATIK produces various types of plants, the *lempuyang* batik motif is a distinctive batik owned by IWATIK and registered its Intellectual Property Rights. This *lempuyang* batik motif is inspired by the medicinal plant *lempuyang* (*Zingiber Aromaticum*).



**Figure 1.** *Lempuyang* (*Zingiber aromaticum*) Plant



**Figure 2.** *Lempuyang* Batik Motif

The selection of this *lempuyang* motif batik was based on the outstanding characteristics of this plant. *Lempuyang* is an annual shrub with a pseudostem. The stem is a circular outgrowth of the leaf midrib. *Lempuyang* leaves have a single alternate arrangement and are green, long, and oval, with a tapered tip and flat borders. The edges are flat. The plant's flower arrangement consists of clusters that emerge from the stems in the soil and are green, reddish, or purple-green. The rhizome is the plant's most commonly used portion. Rhizomes effectively treat colds and cough medicine (Ziraluo, 2020). Due to these exceptional advantages, IWATIK has chosen this primary motif.

In addition to its rich natural resources, Balikpapan City boasts several prominent landmarks that greatly influence IWATIK's batik motif production, notably the oil refineries. IWATIK artisans emphasized motifs that reflect the presence of oil refineries as an integral part of Balikpapan's identity. The extensive investigation conducted with IWATIK artisans has uncovered their perspective that the presence of oil refineries in the city has profoundly affected people's lives and identities. It has resulted in a valuable heritage that still strongly influences the city's current condition. The oil refinery serves as more than simply a literal building; it represents the city's profound historical and economic growth.

The IWATIK artisans argue that integrating the oil refinery symbol into their batik art history expresses gratitude towards the city's history and uniqueness. Further investigation into the impact of the oil refinery on the lives of the people in Balikpapan and the evolving perception of the city can enhance our comprehension of the intricate connection between history, culture, and art creation. According to IWATIK, the oil refinery is a tangible entity representing the city's development that should be preserved for eternity through artistic forms such as Batik. The oil refineries in Balikpapan City serve not only as essential components for creating batik concepts but also as a source of inspiration that enhances the local cultural story. The artists of IWATIK elaborate that the diverse range of themes they create manifests their dedication to portraying the ever-changing course of history and preserving the cultural heritage of Balikpapan City. Consequently, each piece of batik art serves to express gratitude toward the city's unique

identity and continuous development. IWATIK actively involves the community in commemorating the city's history and expressing their gratitude via art by comprehending and internalizing the significance of each motif.



**Figure 3. Kelubut & Oil Refinery Motif**

This pattern depicts a combination of refinery motifs similar to East Kalimantan squid and *kelubut* plants. The design symbolizes the harmonious and unified development of the people of Balikpapan City, such as the squid-like pattern motif taken from the haring stems plant that surrounds the oil refinery in the center. The oil refinery has served as a significant component of Balikpapan City, a historical landmark and a major economic catalyst for the city since ancient times. There is also the *kelubut* plant, which is more often known as the *rambusa* plant. The *kelubut* plant has been used as one of the iconic motifs in Balikpapan City recently, and it was pioneered by the Chair of the Regional National Crafts Council (DEKRANASDA) of Balikpapan City in 2021.

The selection of the *kelubut* plant was based on its abundant growth in the Balikpapan Forest, which has a solid connection to the childhood experiences of children who enjoyed looking for and consuming this plant while exploring the forests of Kalimantan. The *kelubut* plant serves as an essential representation of the diversity of flora found in the forests of Kalimantan. The *kelubut* batik motif has a meaning related to the cultural diversity of Balikpapan. It is based on the philosophy of *kelubut* as a vine depicted on Batik, which symbolizes the bonds between individuals who are members of several tribes and ethnic groups in Balikpapan. They embrace each other warmly even though they have different backgrounds. Apart from that, *kelubut* fruit has a distinctive shape. This fruit is round and contains many seeds inside. This fruit resembles a miniature passion fruit. When it reaches a certain level of maturity, the fruit of the *kelubut* plant will change color from green to yellow and have a delightful taste and the same texture as passion fruit. Apart from that, the fruit of the *kelubut* plant is also equipped with protection from hair. This feather protection is interpreted as the protection of God Almighty for the people of Balikpapan City. It is a hope that God Almighty will always protect the people of Balikpapan City.

The batik motifs produced by IWATIK highlight the unique variety of colors that are typical of East Kalimantan, namely bright and bold colors. It can be seen from the color production of each motif variation, which has consistent details while maintaining the intensity of the colors and motifs typical of East Kalimantan batik. According to IWATIK artisans, the choice of bright and eye-catching colors is in line with the dominant preferences of the people of East Kalimantan, who like bold and bright colors. Apart from being a characteristic, it is also related to the buyers' market in East Kalimantan. Furthermore, the difference in color between East Kalimantan batik and Javanese batik is also a marker of the different cultural identities of each province. The chosen unique color combinations also aim to differentiate East Kalimantan batik from

batik production in other regions of Indonesia. It shows that the concept of coloring in Batik plays an essential role in forming the unique cultural identity of East Kalimantan Batik. Therefore, the choice of color in Batik has a purpose beyond just its visual appeal; it also serves to shape perceptions of the unique cultural heritage of East Kalimantan.

On the other hand, batik production at IWATIK also uses various techniques to create batik products that show typical East Kalimantan designs. The techniques for making Batik include written Batik, stamped Batik, printed Batik, and painted Batik. Written Batik and painted Batik are the superior types of batik techniques in IWATIK batik. This painting and writing technique has different methods. Painted Batik is done by depicting the *malam* wax on an already available motif sketch (Devina & Atrinawati, 2022), while written Batik uses canting like Batik in general. The written batik technique is the first technique learned by artisans at IWATIK, while the painting technique is a development of the written batik technique that has been studied previously.

The batik motifs produced by IWATIK highlight a unique variety of colors that reflect the vibrant and bold color preferences of East Kalimantan. The relationship between the two can be comprehended by recognizing the meticulous attention to detail of IWATIK artisans who consistently uphold the intensity of colors that define *East Kalimantan batik*. According to IWATIK artisans, the choice of vibrant and eye-catching colors is a response to the dominant preferences of the people in East Kalimantan, who tend to favor bold and energetic colors. It is necessary to acknowledge an identifiable difference in the color of East Kalimantan batik compared to Batik from Java, which tends to exhibit a softer color palette. This distinction is not solely based on appearance but rather signifies each province's distinct and intricate cultural identity. The bold color selections are fashionable and convey a profound statement about the liveliness and magnificence of East Kalimantan's culture.

Moreover, the selection of unique color combinations can also be seen as a deliberate objective to differentiate East Kalimantan batik from batik manufacturing in other areas of Indonesia. The color concepts play a crucial role in establishing the distinctive identity of East Kalimantan batik, integrating it with captivating beauty and uniqueness. Within this particular framework, batik color serves a purpose beyond its visual appeal. It serves to mold the perception of East Kalimantan's cultural heritage and ensure its continued existence in the future. Batik artisans have acquired the batik-making process at the IWATIK organization over several years and are continuously refined to achieve excellent batik results. The head of IWATIK stated that she acquired the skill of Batik through specialized education in a dedicated institution. The batik learning activities are designed to enhance women's skills and serve as a means of empowering women in the region. Through the written batik process, IWATIK not only produces Batik that possesses exceptional creative distinctiveness but also places significant emphasis on preserving cultural heritage.

The painting technique is another renowned method used in IWATIK batik. This technique involves painting the *malam* wax onto the cloth. This method is popular in IWATIK batik, which contributes to its distinctive characteristics. This technique is a product of the artisan's pre-existing mastery of written batik skills. Another method is printed Batik. IWATIK does not directly create Batik using the printed process. Instead, it collaborates with batik printing artisans in Java and its partners, providing them with the motifs it already possesses. It is attributed to the insufficient funds required to establish its batik printing workshop and the inadequate amount of land available in their place.

### ***The Role of Government Regulations in Encouraging Cultural Identity Construction through Batik***



The government has a significant role in shaping and preserving the regional character. An instance of government initiatives aimed at influencing local cultural identity is the central government's implementation of decentralization and regional autonomy policies. This initiative seeks to mold the local identity and provide avenues for individuals to express and delve into the abundance of local culture and identity (Tamrin et al., 2020). Preserving and showcasing the uniqueness of a city on the national and worldwide stage heavily relies on the development of identity through local culture. Therefore, in several leadership transitions in Balikpapan City, the government has launched multiple efforts to develop distinctive and one-of-a-kind batik designs specifically for the city. The attempts to employ batik motifs to demonstrate Balikpapan City's distinctiveness are reflected in many regulations.

The government in Balikpapan City has made significant contributions and played a crucial part in developing the city's identity through the promotion and support of Batik. The government's policies and support directly impact the development of Batik. The government also plays a role in conserving and promoting Balikpapan batik subjects as a cultural symbol. The government establishes regulations on the development and exploration of local Batik. It is supported by the decree of Balikpapan Mayor Regulation No. 15/2016, which explains the initiatives to create and promote local Batik, explicitly focusing on utilizing typical regional batik motifs. The purpose of utilizing regional distinctive batik motifs is to enhance and introduce the region's cultural potential while promoting, empowering, and improving local products. Furthermore, the Balikpapan City Government, through the Cooperative, MSME, and Industry Office (*DKUMKMP*) of Balikpapan City, not merely enforces regulations regarding the use of regional Batik but also promotes the growth of Balikpapan batik by enhancing skills, offering guidance, and overseeing regional batik patterns and batik entrepreneurs. The support provided to batik business actors includes training, promotion, equipment, and copyright facilitation.

The government's role and involvement in the development of Balikpapan batik is aimed at ensuring the continuity of business production, fostering growth, and facilitating effective promotion for Balikpapan batik artisans and entrepreneurs. The actions undertaken involve training local artisans in creating batik patterns and fostering comprehension regarding the philosophy, techniques, and cultural importance of Batik as a traditional kind of textile. In addition, the Balikpapan City government also plays a role in supporting the establishment of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for batik makers. It is a form of government dedicated to upholding and maintaining the authenticity of the creation of every citizen of Balikpapan City. Registration of Batik on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) is also an effort to maintain the originality and uniqueness of Balikpapan batik and avoid plagiarism in the creation of batik motifs in Balikpapan City and other cities. Furthermore, It is very important for the long-term development of Balikpapan City batik in the context of preserving Batik, which is officially registered in the government database of the Republic of Indonesia.

Moreover, the city government is also actively promoting Balikpapan batik products locally and nationally. It can be seen from the increasing participation of local batik craftsmen in exhibition events, such as the Balikpapan City MSME Festival, fashion shows, and government activities at both local and national levels. They are also becoming participants in major craft exhibitions like Inacraft. Furthermore, the Tourism office and other relevant organizations actively contribute to the promotion of Balikpapan batik. They showcase the Batik at various government and non-government events, where the *Manuntung* Tourism Ambassadors of Balikpapan City wear it. IWATIK belongs to a government-supported group that aims to empower women in the Mekarsari sub-district. IWATIK has consistently participated in activities focused on developing batik motifs, including training and national exhibitions, intending to promote IWATIK products. The chairman of IWATIK acknowledges the significant

role of government support in providing substantial backing for local artisans, such as IWATIK, to foster continuous development and enhance their competitiveness. Nevertheless, numerous advancements must be undertaken to preserve local culture and prevent its loss due to time-lapse.

***Women's Empowerment and Community Development in IWATIK***

This research reveals a comprehensive aspect of the impact of women's empowerment in IWATIK, which makes a substantial contribution to the development of the local community in Balikpapan City. IWATIK serves as both a supporter of local community advancement and an advocate for the conservation of local culture, which also generates positive economic benefits for the women in the neighborhood. The research indicates that IWATIK serves as both a hub for batik art production and a platform for active female participation in multiple facets of organizational operations. It can be seen from the involvement of women in this organization, most of whom are aged 40 years and above. They are given the opportunity to actively participate in the management of organizations and activities in this organization and contribute to the progress and growth of batik art in Balikpapan City.

Women's empowerment at IWATIK not only covers the economic sector but also focuses on developing and improving its members' skills to continue improving each individual's abilities. IWATIK received much assistance in the form of training from the government and State-Owned Enterprises by participating in training and development programs. With these trainings, it is hoped that women at IWATIK can improve their technical and leadership skills, leading to positive growth in their personal and professional lives. Even though IWATIK members are quite old, their commitment to gaining knowledge within the organization shows that women have equal opportunities in the arts and organizational fields. Women's participation in IWATIK not only adds to the value of works of art but also the income generated from batik production and sales, which can make a significant contribution to the economic welfare of IWATIK members and ultimately also have an impact on the financial sustainability of local communities.

Women at IWATIK play an essential role in encouraging community empowerment. By preserving the art of Batik in their region, they have established a strong cultural identity and increased Balikpapan's tourist attraction and prosperity. City as a whole. Apart from being equipped with batik-making skills, the women at IWATIK are also equipped with sewing and clothing design skills. Their creation has been showed at various fashion shows in Balikpapan City. This initiative aims to pave the way for artisans in Balikpapan City to improve their skills in the field of Batik, which also adapts to fashion trends that are expected to continue to develop in the coming years.



**Figure 4: IWATIK Batik in Balikpapan Festival Fashion Show 2023**

Even though there has been much innovation and development in IWATIK batik, women also face obstacles, including limited access to resources and competitive markets and a lack of funds to expand into the larger batik industry. However, their ability to overcome these challenges demonstrates their resilience and capacity to generate new opportunities for further development. The craftsmen continue to develop new ideas and methods to maintain IWATIK and encourage women's empowerment in this organization.

## DISCUSSION

By featuring the IWATIK batik motif, this brand effectively reflects the cultural history of Balikpapan. Each motif produced by IWATIK represents a depiction of historical events, legends, and principles that exist in society. It is also supported by choice of colors that adapt to the local community's culture. IWATIK's ability to capture fundamental aspects of local culture means that the IWATIK organization not only develops the batik industry but also participates in the preservation and introduction of the cultural riches of Balikpapan City on a broader stage. This research emphasizes that each pattern and color is filled with meaning and symbolism originating from the local community's culture. It aligns with research by Syakir et al. (2022) and Zuhro et al. (2020), which shows that Batik can represent a city's cultural identity through the patterns it depicts. For example, the use of specific colors or the arrangement of patterns may refer to principles such as harmony or balance, resulting in several layers of meaning that form a deep cultural character in each batik work produced. IWATIK batik production symbolizes the cultural heritage of Balikpapan City by displaying distinctive customs and art.

This research significantly adds to our understanding of how IWATIK batik art functions as an essential medium for expressing the cultural identity of Balikpapan City. By understanding the meaning and philosophy contained behind each motif, the public appreciates the cultural richness and conservation efforts carried out by batik craftsmen such as IWATIK, and individuals can increase their understanding of the meaning contained in each motif. In addition, the cultural identity depicted in IWATIK batik is more than just a visual design; it also expresses the rich historical stories depicted in this traditional cloth. The result has in a significant artistic legacy in an ever-changing cultural environment.

The depiction of cultural identity in IWATIK batik also includes the incorporation of new concepts and adaptation to current fashion trends. While maintaining its traditional essence, IWATIK boldly displays elements that depict community life and the historical significance of Balikpapan City, including the iconic oil refinery, which is closely related to the identity of Balikpapan City. This cultural representation functions to save local heritage and increase the promotion of Balikpapan's cultural identity both at regional and global levels. It reflects a developing cultural identity, demonstrating IWATIK's willingness to accept change and cultural diversity. The diversity displayed in IWATIK's works is a deliberate representation of various aspects of Balikpapan society.

Remarkably, these findings show that the depiction of cultural identity in IWATIK batik is not solely the result of individual work but the result of collaboration and involvement of the entire batik community. By engaging in collaborative discussions while actively involving each member, each motif combines elements from multiple voices, resulting in a work of art that symbolizes a collective identity. Furthermore, examining social interactions in the IWATIK environment, as analyzed in social sciences (Haqiqi et al., 2019), emphasizes the importance of women artisans in upholding family ties and communal solidarity through their crafts. Women's participation in strategic decision-making, including goal formulation and team

management, fosters an inclusive and competitive environment. It fosters the essence of women's leadership, thereby having an impact on the growth of organizations and communities. The economic sustainability of IWATIK batik production, as studied within the Indonesian Batik MSME framework carried out by Gunawan et al. (2022) plays a vital role in the economic empowerment of its members. This study finding aligns with Gunawan's research, which shows that empowering women through batik MSMEs is very effective.

In order to strengthen economic sustainability and ensure long-term success, IWATIK can identify institutional barriers and supporting factors, such as sustainable entrepreneurial practices. Furthermore, the implementation of training programs, as exemplified in research by Fatimah et al. (2023) on entrepreneurship in the tourism industry, has the potential to support the economic development of women craftsmen in IWATIK. It is in line with research by Albar & Darmayanti (2021) that IWATIK has contributed to the preservation of Batik and its cultural heritage, where IWATIK participates in preserving traditional crafts and has an influence on the economic and socio-cultural environment of Balikpapan.

## **CONCLUSION**

The creation and growth of Balikpapan batik is a crucial aspect that contributes to the preservation of Batik as a local identity and heritage in Balikpapan City. To maintain and preserve the rich diversity of Balikpapan Batik, knowledge and development of Batik in Balikpapan City must continue to be pursued and preserved collectively. This preservation must be carried out jointly by the local government, artisans, and the community. The introduction and strengthening of culture are critical in today's society because people's lives are increasingly affected by globalization. This state of globalization means that widely recognized cultural recognition is significant.

Preserving Balikpapan batik is an effort made to maintain the cultural heritage of Balikpapan City. Batik not only functions as a traditional textile but also as a means of displaying the cultural identity of Balikpapan City. Batik can represent Balikpapan City's diversity, a multicultural city with abundant natural resources. Hence, the preservation of Batik by its continued use in various contexts, its promotion at local, national, and international platforms, and the development and supervision of its production and use would undoubtedly contribute significantly to the preservation of Batik as the cultural emblem of Balikpapan City. In order to sustain the presence of Balikpapan batik in the era of globalization, it is imperative to include the government, local artisans, stakeholders, and individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Moreover, the research conducted through IWATIK demonstrates that women's empowerment benefits individuals and has a broader influence on local communities, economies, and sustainable development. This result recommends thoughtful consideration regarding formulating policies and implementing methods that promote women's empowerment in the local arts and crafts industry. The findings of this research have substantial significance for formulating policies that promote women's empowerment and the development of communities in the vicinity of IWATIK. Adopting a results-oriented strategy can assist in developing more focused strategies, such as allocating funds towards enhancing skills training, ensuring access to resources, and promoting IWATIK batik products in the broader market. Women's empowerment in IWATIK is not a final objective but an ongoing procedure that necessitates consistent assistance. Product diversification, increased community involvement, and meeting market demands are vital stages that can lead to sustainable growth for IWATIK and its community.

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