

## INTRODUCING INDONESIAN BATIK TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: A CULTURAL HERITAGE APPRECIATION PROGRAM

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### ABSTRACT

*The creative industry is currently an important pillar in supporting national economic growth, with the batik subsector having a major contribution in terms of both cultural and economic value. Batik, as an Indonesian cultural heritage that has been recognized by UNESCO, faces serious challenges due to globalization and lack of cross-cultural understanding. Tarumanagara University's Community Service Team (PKM) responded to this problem through a community service activity in the form of a cultural workshop at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore. The purpose of this activity is to introduce batik as a cultural identity as well as a creative economic asset to international students, as well as to foster global awareness and a culture-based entrepreneurial spirit. The implementation method includes the stages of partner interviews, literature studies, plan development, workshop implementation, and comprehensive evaluation. The workshop included the delivery of academic material on the creative economy from the perspectives of Indonesia and Singapore, discussions on the philosophy of batik as a cultural and economic instrument, and hands-on batik coloring. The results showed a positive response and high enthusiasm from the Singaporean students, who not only gained theoretical understanding, but also practical experience of the batik production process. This activity succeeded in strengthening cultural understanding and creative economic potential among international students. Cultural collaboration like this has the potential to become a strategic approach in cultural preservation, improving the quality of global human resources, and expanding networks of cooperation between nations through art, education, and culture-based entrepreneurship.*

**Keywords:** batik; creative industry; entrepreneurship; cultural workshop; entrepreneurial spirit

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The creative industry is currently a pillar of the economy that has good prospects and can be relied upon for the nation's economy. The Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs, Airlangga Hartanto, said that Southeast Asia is a large potential market and has stable political and economic stability so that this potential needs to be optimized (Isma, 2021). In Indonesia, the creative economy subsector has a major contribution to the national economy by contributing 7.44 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 14.8 percent of the workforce, and 13.77 percent of exports.

The same goes for Singapore. Singapore has a creative economy, especially in arts, culture, media, and design, which is dynamic and growing quite rapidly despite limited resources. According to the Ministry of Culture, Community, and Youth (2024), the nominal added value of the three sectors has increased by almost 50% over the past 5 years. This opens up opportunities for creative practitioners, especially if they are able to capitalize on growing demand and trends. Similar to Indonesia, the Singapore government also continues to provide support to help the creative economy continue to grow optimally from various sides such as funding, training, and intermediaries.

Indonesia is known for its rich culture, one of which is batik. Batik is an important asset in the creative industry (Nimas & Widyastuti, 2021). Batik motif is a pattern or pattern that becomes the framework of the image in batik in the form of a combination of insen shapes, shapes, and lines into a single unit that realizes batik as a whole (Nugroho, 2020). The contribution to the National GDP from the handicraft and batik industry sub-sector currently has the potential to be developed further (Zuriyah & Salma, 2021). The current Indonesian government is also making efforts to maintain batik as one of the supporting industries and this is evidenced by the high value of batik exports) (Dinar & Kurniawan, 2020). The batik industry is also a sub-sector of the textile industry that the government believes has great support power in driving the country's economy (Pramono et al., 2023). Batik, which remains timeless throughout time, further strengthens Indonesia's cultural identity, but its existence has also experienced a decline in value due to the influence of globalization (Suharson, 2021).



**Figure 1.** Pattern of Batik Solo

The basic principle needed for Indonesian society today in the midst of globalization is to maintain traditional batik by interpreting batik so that it can maintain the existence of philosophical meaning and high commercial value (Suherlan et al., 2023). This culture is recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, batik is not only a unique textile art but also a cultural identity that reflects Indonesia's history, philosophy and skills. However, such global recognition is still not enough to fully introduce the full identity of batik to many international communities, especially international students for academic and cultural exchange programs.

Academic and cultural exchanges between Indonesia and Singapore have proven significant contributions in introducing and appreciating batik culture as an Indonesian cultural heritage as well as efforts to enrich the cultural knowledge of Singaporeans. This has been done by one of the Indonesian communities, namely the ISIK Community, which introduces batik and the culture of the archipelago to Singaporean students (Ardliyanto, 2024). Not only that, Singaporeans who participated in this academic and cultural exchange also indirectly gained an understanding of the culture that can be preserved through textile products and efforts to preserve a culture that is rich in meaning and history.

The partner in this service program is Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Singapore. Students at Ngee Ann Polytechnic are students who have expertise in business and entrepreneurship programs, so they need various forms of ideas to implement business and entrepreneurship programs, including arts from various sectors.

The main problem faced by partners today is the need to prepare Human Resources (HR) in the field of creative economy professionally and optimally and students are considered to have a high enough effectiveness to utilize the potential of the current creative economy. Despite limited resources, Singaporean students still show a positive response to cultural activities, especially when conducted in a structured and inclusive format. With good economic potential and enthusiasm, it is necessary to optimize Singapore's human resources (HR), especially among students.

Several studies have been conducted related to the topic of this activity, including a cultural exchange conducted by the University of Indonesia in 2023, with the result that Singaporean students have a high enthusiasm in understanding the philosophy of the culture given at the cultural

exchange at that time, namely batik (Anjaini, 2023). Then the same thing was also done in Surabaya, ISIK Community, and the results showed that students felt more appreciative of a culture after experiencing it firsthand (Ardliyanto, 2024). This can happen because Singaporean students are used to an education system that is very theory-based and digital.

## 2. METHOD

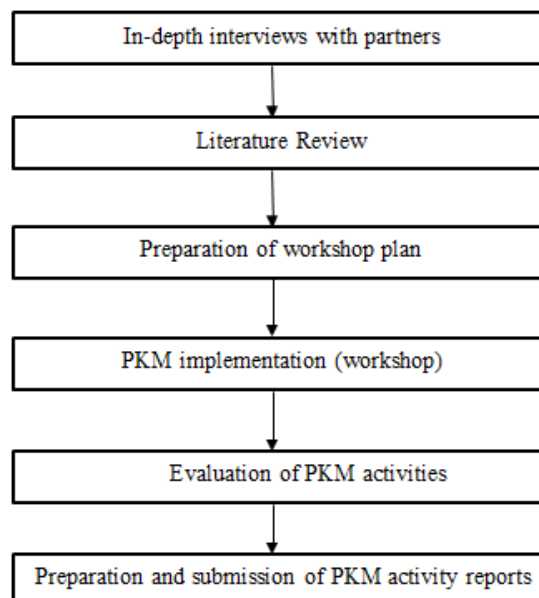
To overcome the problems faced by partners, academic and cultural exchanges are needed as a means of supporting the nation's economy in the world of creative economy. The solution offered in this program is the implementation of academic and cultural workshops through learning how to dye batik and the philosophy of batik.

By conducting this academic and cultural workshop, it is hoped that it can facilitate students in learning about culture technically and philosophically. In addition, it can also be a means of holistic learning that includes intellectual, social, and emotional aspects. In today's globalized world, the ability to understand and appreciate other cultures is essential. Cultural workshops help students to recognize cultural differences without prejudice, develop mutual respect and tolerance, and understand that culture is part of a nation's identity and history.

In addition to academic and cultural perceptions, these workshops will also provide an understanding that it is necessary to have global awareness and social responsibility. Academic and cultural workshops can shape students to think as global citizens who understand the importance of preserving culture and maintaining harmony between nations.

The method of implementing this PKM activity is in the form of a workshop or delivery of material regarding Indonesian academics and culture. This workshop was conducted with the aim of preserving Indonesian culture and preparing Singaporean human resources (HR) to become more professional. One method of preparing industrial human resources is through technical skills training.

To ensure the smooth and optimal implementation of this activity, a series of stages or steps are needed to reduce potential shortcomings or errors during the PKM process on partners. The stages of PKM activities that will be carried out by the Tarumanagara University PKM Team are as follows:



**Figure 2.** Steps/Stages of Implementation

The initial step in the implementation of this Student Creativity Program (PKM) activity begins with the implementation of in-depth interviews with partners. Through this interview process, the PKM Team of Tarumanagara University aims to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the needs, problems, and expectations of the partners towards the program to be run. This data

collection is intended to produce a comprehensive picture of partner conditions from various aspects, so that it can be the basis for designing targeted and effective programs.

In the second stage of the implementation of this activity, an in-depth literature study was carried out related to the topic of the problem identified, by referring to various relevant reference sources. This study aims to enrich the scientific foundation, both in terms of theory and understanding of concepts, strategies, and techniques that are appropriate and have the potential to be applied in the context of partner problems.

In the third stage of this activity, a mentoring plan was developed in the form of a workshop that involved active participation from the partners. This workshop planning includes various important components, including the objectives to be achieved, the material to be delivered, the training methods used, and the need for tools and materials that support the smooth implementation of activities. In addition, a detailed activity structure was also designed, including the duration of each session and the implementation strategy designed so that the activities run optimally, interactively, and in accordance with the needs of the partners.

The fourth stage in the implementation of this activity is the implementation of the Student Creativity Program (PKM) which is carried out in accordance with the plan formulated in the previous stage. During the workshop session, the PKM Team of Tarumanagara University delivered the materials that had been prepared to the partners. In addition to the presentation of materials, this activity also includes interactive consultation and simulation sessions, which provide space for partners to discuss problems and apply knowledge practically.

The fifth stage in the implementation of this activity is the implementation of program evaluation. This evaluation aims to measure the level of effectiveness of the program that has been implemented, as well as assess the extent of its impact on partners. In addition, the evaluation process is also intended to identify constructive feedback from partners, which can be used as a basis for future program improvement and development.

The final stage of the implementation of this activity is the preparation and submission of an activity report based on the results that have been obtained. This report serves as an official document that documents the entire series of activities comprehensively, starting from the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. It includes program achievements, impacts on partners, and strategic recommendations for the implementation of similar activities in the future.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In the context of current economic dynamics marked by rapid technological development, globalization, and changing consumer preferences, the creative economy sector shows enormous potential to grow and develop significantly, both at the national and global levels. This potential is reflected in its contribution to job creation, increasing added value, as well as its ability to encourage innovation and strengthen local cultural identity in the midst of increasingly competitive market competition.

Understanding and preserving culture is not only an effort to preserve national identity, but also an important strategy in driving sustainable creative economic growth. For students, this understanding becomes even more relevant as the culture-based creative economy offers opportunities for innovation that can create a competitive advantage in the global market. The integration of cultural values in business models can produce high value-added products and services, while building strong differentiation in industry competition. Therefore, the ability to identify local cultural potential and develop it into an economic asset must be part of the strategic competencies possessed by prospective business people in the digital economy era.



**Figure 3.** Mentoring Process of Ngee Ann Polytechnic Students by Untar PKM Team

This PKM activity was held on Monday, January 20, 2025 at Ngee Ann Polytechnic students. This workshop activity lasted for 3 intensive hours. The first 1 hour was an explanation of the importance of academics and culture in doing business or entrepreneurship in today's creative economy. The explanation uses two perspectives from both countries, Indonesia and Singapore. This is done to achieve an understanding of the world of entrepreneurship in the creative economy with a broader and global perspective. The second 1-hour session was a description and discussion of the position of batik as a means of cultural preservation and the support of Indonesia's creative economy. This activity is carried out so that students can analyze and discuss with real examples of a culture that can be a tool to support the creative economy of a nation.

The last 1 hour was done by coloring batik that had been brought by the Untar PKM Team. This activity is carried out so that students can experience firsthand being a practitioner of the creative economy, especially in the field of creative textiles. Through this activity, students not only learn theoretically about the creative industry, but also gain hands-on experience that can increase their appreciation of the batik production process as Indonesia's cultural heritage. In addition, this activity trains fine motor skills, creativity, and understanding of the economic value of an art product. This activity also aims to foster an entrepreneurial spirit among students, where they can see business opportunities in the field of creative textiles, especially batik. By being directly involved in the coloring process, students are expected to be able to develop innovative ideas that can be applied in the development of creative economy products in the future.



**Figure 4.** One of the Batik Results from Ngee Ann Polytechnic Students

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Ngee Ann Polytechnic students enthusiastically accepted the insights and experiences provided by PKM Untar and showed readiness to implement their own country's culture. Because without this enthusiasm, the preservation and appreciation of a culture, especially in the world of creative economy from themselves needs further development. With a picture of such a situation, it can be concluded that today's students are ready to appreciate and carry out academic and cultural preservation efficiently and optimally in accordance with their respective fields of expertise.

Through the workshop held by the PKM Team of Tarumanagara University, they gained new insights into the process of making batik as part of Indonesia's cultural heritage that has high artistic, philosophical, and economic potential. The Singaporean students were able to experience firsthand how complex and valuable the creative process in batik making is, from designing motifs to its distinctive coloring techniques.

With this knowledge, Singaporean students are also equipped with the understanding that traditional artworks can be a promising source of creative economy if developed innovatively. They can start creating collaborations between batik motifs and modern design trends, market these products digitally, and build culture-based small businesses that can compete in the global market.



This activity ultimately opens up opportunities for Singaporean students to use batik learning as inspiration in developing creative industries based on local culture, while strengthening cultural ties between Indonesia and Singapore through art and entrepreneurial collaboration.

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## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest, financial, professional, or personal, related to the submitted work. This work is affiliated with LPPM Universitas Tarumanagara; however, the institution had no influence on the study design, data collection and analysis, writing of the article, or the decision to submit it to JICESD. None of the authors serve or have served on the editorial board of JICESD, nor are they affiliated with any organization that may benefit from the publication of this article.

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