

THE BATIK OF PEKALONGAN: BUILDING ITS IDENTITY THROUGH THE COMPOSITION OF COLOR

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Abstract

The color composition is not only connected with the art technique, but also the materials. A method coloring and patterns on fabric is known as the resist-dyeing which is widely spread in Indonesia and known as Batik. Javanese Batik can divide into Palace Batik and Coastal Batik. The Batik of Pekalongan is the most famous of the Coastal Batik in a variety of colors and produced by following the changes of the time without losing the style. The research will be focused on the study of Batik coloring and to identify the color composition. Survey and interview are used to collect data which representing the history of Batik Pekalongan. Artifact analysis is conducted in this study, using graphical information to manage depiction the physical object. It is found the number of colors on a piece of Batik Pekalongan fabric reaches ten different colors. The color combinations are reported by the batik artifacts which show that every color can combine with another color. This study shows that Batik Pekalongan build their identity through the color composition. An interesting future study might involve investigating the color scheme based on the local wisdom. It is a property of Indonesia if the potential is fully utilized.

Keywords: The hand-wax Batik, the Batik of Pekalongan, color composition.

1. Introduction

The term of color composition is thought as the organization of the visual element color. Understanding how the color composition works are the background knowledge that supports the interactive relationship between the colors. The color composition can be applied to any work of art and connected with the art technique as well as the materials. A method of coloring and patterns on fabric is known as the resist-dyeing. This technique widely spread in Indonesia is well-known as Batik. According to Indonesia National Consensus 1996, Batik is a work art on fabric, applying resist-dyeing with Batik-wax as a resist to the dye colors. The art of Batik fabric is most highly developed on the island of Java in Indonesia. The Javanese Batik is notable for the complexity of the pattern and the diversity of color.

The Batik diffuses through out the social and ceremonial life of Javanese people. It provides them with a sense of identity as an essential component of their life. Wearing Batik expresses the feeling and shows the social status and position of the person; Making batik builds their body and soul healthy, outpouring of feelings, and contributes to the family economy (Sekar-Jagad, 2015). Batik from Java has a long history of acculturation which influenced by a variety of cultures and is the most developed in terms of pattern and color in Indonesia. Raffles (1817) notes that particulars of the batik, which not less than a hundred are distinguished by their appropriate names.



Figure 1. The contrasting style of Palace Batik and Coastal Batik

Javanese Batik can be divided into Palace Batik (*Indonesia: Batik Keraton*) and Coastal Batik (*Indonesia: Batik Pesisir*) as shown in collection of The Museum Batik Yogyakarta in Figure 1. Palace Batik has orderly, controlled and geometric patterns. It has dark color such as *soga* brown, indigo blue, and black combined with a background of white or cream. Palace Batik is produced in Surakarta and Yogyakarta, where the traditional cities regarded as the centre of Javanese culture. Coastal Batik has vibrant colors and patterns inspired by a wide range of cultures as a result of maritime trading. Coastal Batik is produced in several areas of Northern Java and is commonly recognized by the region where they originated in, such as Batik from Pekalongan area.

The Batik of Pekalongan is the most famous of the coastal batik because of variety of colors. The art of Pekalongan Batik represents the influence of Indian, Dutch, Chinese, Japanese and its local culture (Sekar-Jagad, 2015). In the 19th century, the Pekalongan city developed for the major of Batik Centre in North Java. Smend (2006) explains that the commercial success of the floral Batik of Pekalongan was so great that in 1927, there were close to 1100 Batik workshops operated in the town and nearby villages, which constituted almost one-third of the total Batik production in Java. Some of the best-known Batik makers from Pekalongan were Eliza van Zuylen, Simonet, The Tie Siet, and Oey Soe Tjoen (Djoemena, 1986).

2. Research Background

The process of Batik dyes requires the complex knowledge, achieved through months of experiments. The owners of the Batik workshops usually have their own formulas for batik dyes. Smend (2006) points out that the dyeing formulas were rarely written and usually transmitted orally or learned through practice, in some cases they were known only to the owner of the workshop. This circumstance confirms that the Batik of Pekalongan is made by

following the changes of the time without losing their style. The colors and the patterns of Pekalongan Batik tell the story and illustrate many of the areas from past and present.

The Batik of Pekalongan are recognized in the richly colored. The color composition refers to choice the colors which is used for artistic effect as well as for practical reasons. Djoemena (1986) states that sometimes as many as eight bright, striking colors will be appear on Batik Pekalongan. Elliot (1984) explains that Batik of Pekalongan explode with brilliant reds, traditional blues, and radiant yellow, blending with soft pastel tints of green, lilac, and pink. Hitchcock (1991) notes that Pekalongan traditional fabrics have floral motif such as in pink, yellow and blue. It indicates that the colors used for the Batik of Pekalongan can be called as the organization of the colors according to the composition. This research will focus on studying the coloring on Batik of Pekalongan and also identify the variety of colors based on the color composition.

3. Method

Following related research in design, an applied research is used to develop information which aimed to identify the color composition of Pekalongan Batik. Hedrick, Bickman and Rog (1993) suggest that applied research strives to improve our understanding of a specific problem with the intent of contributing to the solution of that problem. Both practical and statistical data according to colors of batik are collected in this method. Writing 'the story of Pekalongan Batik' makes a connection between 'the past' and 'the present' according to the color composition. It can be helped by studying historical artifacts. Martin and Hanington (2012) state that artifact analysis is a systematic examination of the material, aesthetic, and interactive qualities of objects contribute to an understanding of their physical, social, and cultural contexts. Therefore, an artifact analysis is conducted in this study that using the graphical information to manage depiction the color composition of Batik Pekalongan as the physical objects.

In order to obtain a sample representative of the research objects, survey and interview are used to collect the data for representing history of Pekalongan Batik based on the time of Batik production. The population for the study provided in Figure 2 comprises three places: A private collection of Pekalongan Batik which is presenting 'the past' in the Museum Batik Yogyakarta, Batik of Pekalongan made by Batik workshop of Liem Poo Hien which is presenting 'the past' and 'the present', and Batik of Pekalongan made by Batik workshop of Lianawaty Hidayat which is presenting 'the present'. A sampling procedure is used to select

the hand-wax Batik fabrics from the collection of Pekalongan Batik. Through the sampling procedure below between ten to twelve pieces hand-wax Batik from every population are used for the study.



Figure 2. The population of the study representing the time series

4. Result

In this study, the graphical information is developed to organize and arrange the qualitative data of coloring for the hand-wax Batik fabrics. The hand-wax Batik fabrics are identified with the period of batik production which is representing 'the past' and 'the present' Batik of Pekalongan. This allows us to extract the topic of color composition of Batik Pekalongan of the data as follows. At the first step of artifact analysis, the hand-wax Batik fabrics are chosen based on the time of production in every population. Based on the available data, the Batik artifacts reach time from 1910 until 2010. The second step identifies the coloring for a piece of hand-wax batik fabric. The colors can be classified into three categories: colors of background, colors of main patterns, and additive colors.

The Private Collection of Batik Pekalongan in the Museum Batik Yogyakarta.

The Museum Batik Yogyakarta is a private museum. The museum was opened in 1973 by Mr. Hadi Nugroho and Mrs. Jumima Dewi Sukaningsih and now is managed by Mr. Brilliant Hidayah, the fourth-generation of the family. The museum address at Jl. Dr. Sutomo No. 13A, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55211, Indonesia. The Museum Batik Yogyakarta has a great private collection of Javanese hand-wax batik, consisting of Palace Batik and Coastal Batik. Ten pieces of colorful hand-wax Pekalongan Batik made during 1910 and 1950 are selected for analyzing the artifacts in this study. The color composition of 'the past of Pekalongan Batik' shown in Figure 3 as follows:

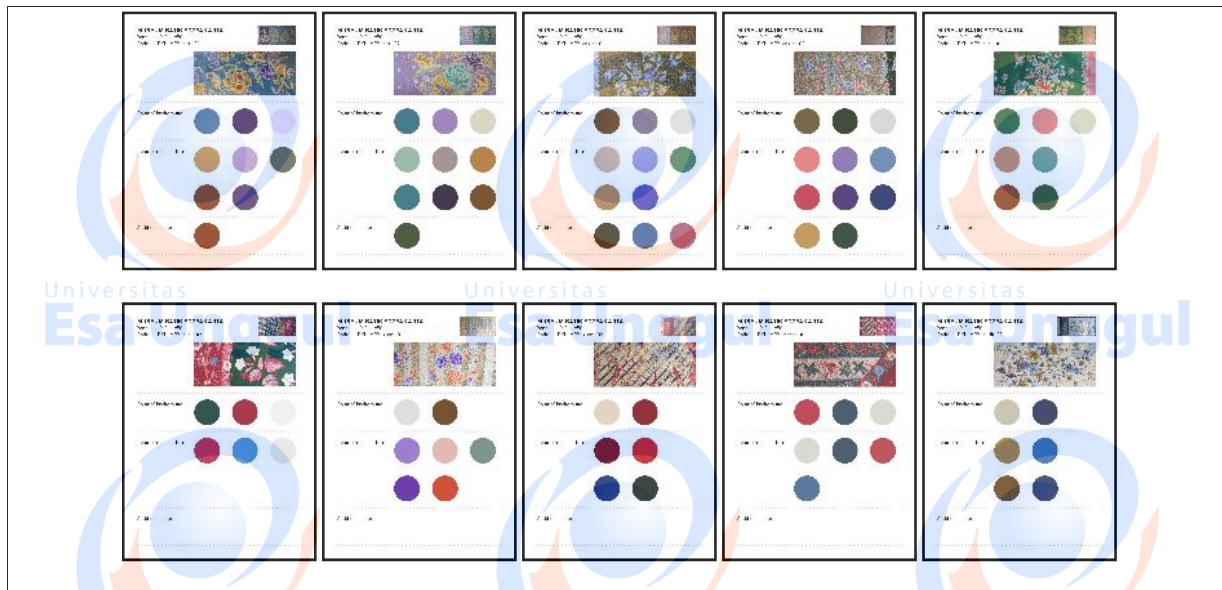
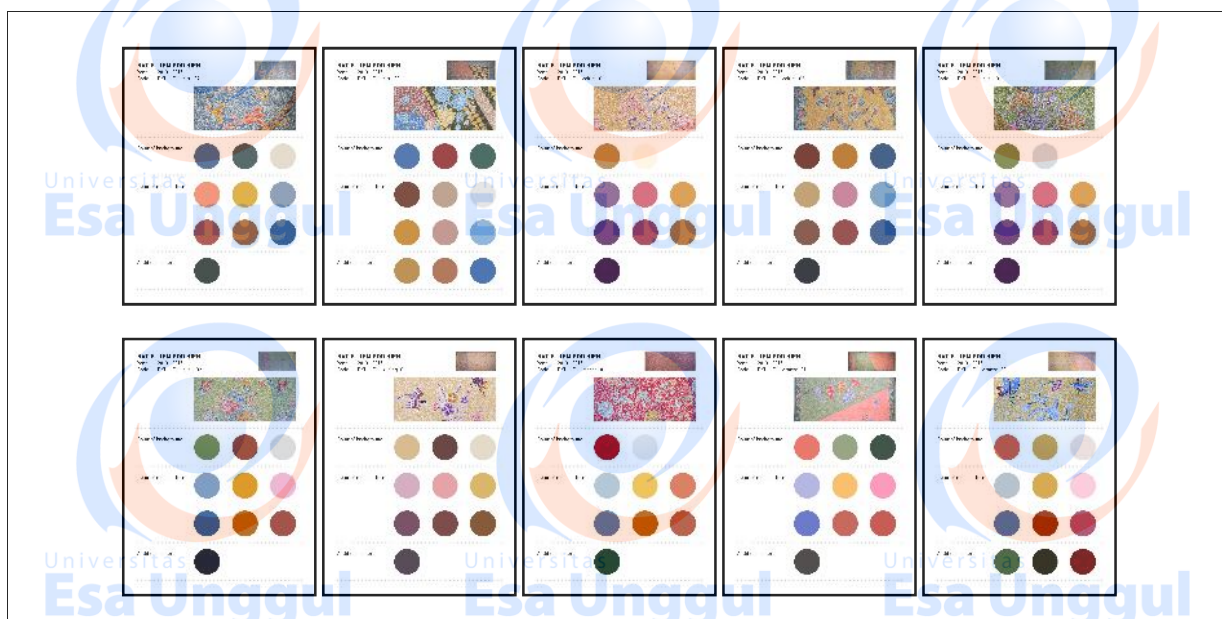


Figure 3. Analyzing color composition of Pekalongan batiks collected by Museum Batik Yogyakarta

The Batik of Pekalongan made by Batik workshop of Liem Poo Hien.

The batik workshop has been established since 1910 and located at Jl. Raya Kedungwuni No. 192, Pekalongan 51173. The workshop is lead by Mrs. Liem Poo Hien now, the fourth-generation of the family. She has her own formulas for batik dyes that were transmitted from her father and learned through practice. Only the owner who knows about the pattern and the coloring on the hand-wax Batik fabrics. Therefore, the hand-wax Batik fabrics made by Liem Poo Hien represents 'the past' and 'the present' of Pekalongan Batik. Analyzing the color composition on the twelve pieces of hand-wax Batik of Pekalongan can be seen in Figure 4 as follows.



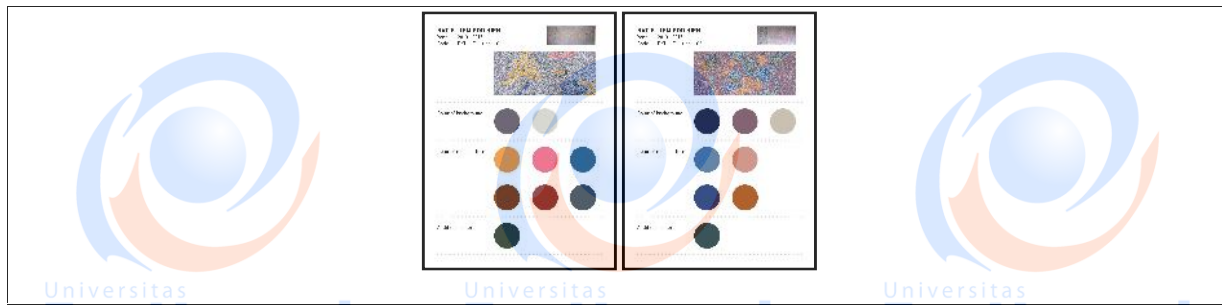


Figure 4. Analyzing color composition of Pekalongan batiks made by Liem Poo Hien

The Batik of Pekalongan made by Batik workshop of Lianawaty Hidayat.

The Batik workshop of Mrs. Lianawaty Hidayat is located at Jl. Dr. Sutomo No.9, Pekalongan 51129, Indonesia and operates since 2000 until now. The workshop produces the hand-wax Batik of Pekalongan which has characterize the patterns of coastal Batik and many kinds of the color combination. As sampling, these Batik represents the objects of the research in defining the color composition of Batik Pekalongan. The twelve pieces of hand-wax Batik fabrics which made between 2005 and 2010 are chosen for analyzing the artifacts in this study.



Figure 5. Analyzing color composition of Pekalongan batiks made by Lianawaty Hidayat

5. Discussion

The results of this study confirm that Batik of Pekalongan has rich colors. The coloring on the hand-wax Pekalongan Batik can be explained as the time series. Figure 6 describes the result of time series organization from testing the consistency of color composition of Pekalongan Batik. The data of colors on the thirty four pieces of hand-wax Batik are collected in this graphical information. The horizontal is divided into the hand-wax Batik fabric based on three population of sampling arranged from 'the past batik' to 'the present batik'. The vertical shows the colors which grouped based on the modern color theory of Itten (1970) into yellow (yellow light – yellow – yellow dark), red (red light – red – red dark), purple (purple light - purple), blue (blue light – blue – blue dark), green (green light - green), grey and black. It is important to note that the adjacent coloring on the hand-wax Batik fabrics are united into the main color groups of color combination.

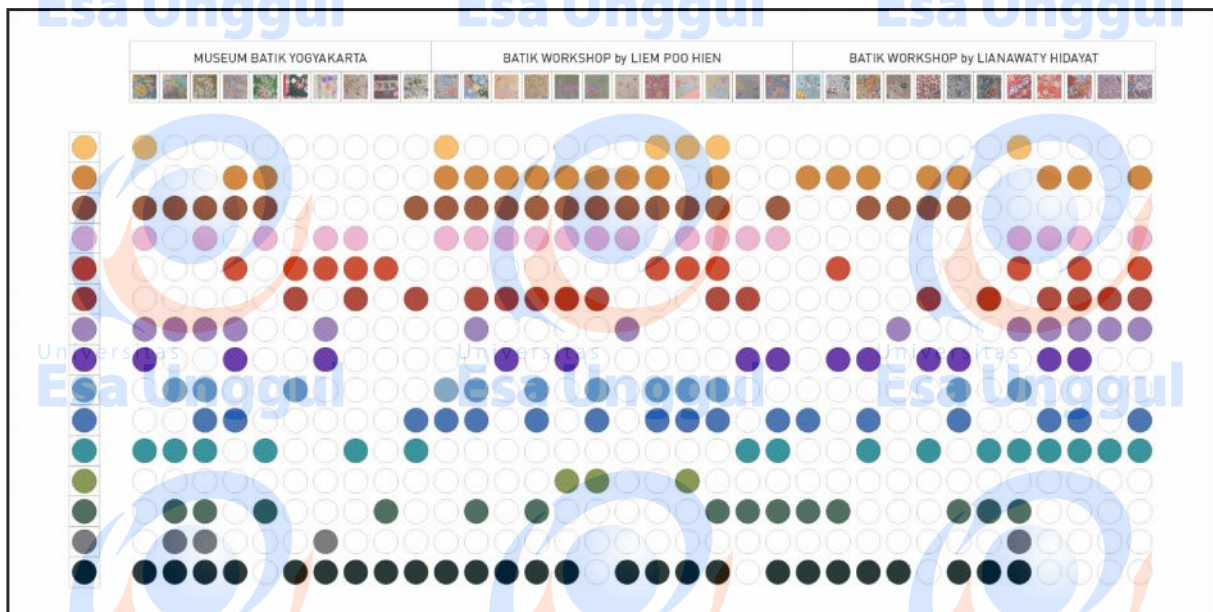


Figure 6. The time series of Pekalongan batiks visualize the color composition

From the result, it is found that the number of colors on a piece of Pekalongan Batik fabric has ten different colors. It is quite possible to find more than ten colors on a hand-wax Batik fabric. The color combinations are reported by the Batik artifacts in this study show that every color can combine with another color. It is noted that the most amount of colors combination have eight colors. In addition, it is clear that there is no correlation between the background color of batik fabric and the colors of main patterns.

6. Conclusion and Future Study

In this research, analyzing the Batik artifact creates an impression that the color composition coloring on the hand-wax Pekalongan Batik fabrics never become different all the time. This study recommends on building identify Batik of Pekalongan through the color composition. From this point, an interesting future study in the field of visual communication design might involve to investigate the color composition of Pekalongan Batik and to build the color scheme based on the local wisdom. It is a property of Indonesia if the potential is fully utilized.

Acknowledgement

The research for this paper is financially supported by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia in 2018.

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