

BRANDING OF PRODUCTS AS A REGION AND COUNTRY ICON: GOVERNANCE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

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Abstract

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This study seeks to describe and give an overview of product branding theory from the phenomenon of entrepreneurial empowerment for original Solo batik (Batik Asli Solo) clothing products. By referring to Trihatmoko (2019b), this study applied a qualitative research method using a phenomenological approach and pragmatism interpretation. The theoretical foundation was structurally depicted in agency theory and channel management from Bergen, Dutta, and Walker (1992). The results of this study identified that product branding includes entrepreneurial creativity and marketing strategies that determine or have an impact on brand performance and the competitive market. Creativity and marketing strategies carried out by batik entrepreneurs depend on government regulations at the regional and central levels, in the context of economic empowerment. Brand performance and market competitions are branding outcomes that create regional and country icons. An icon is built continuously by consumers' perceptions and evaluations of their behavior, namely consumers and businesses by the local, national and international market. So, the theorizing of the research findings describes that batik is an icon of Solo and Indonesia for the international community. This paper contributes to the expansion of marketing management knowledge, namely the marketing mix, entrepreneurial behavior, and consumer and business behavior. In practice, it has implications for the entrepreneurship of clothing products based on local wisdom as well as government regulations in economic empowerment for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Keywords: Batik Entrepreneurship, Clothing Product, Government Regulation, Marketing Strategies, Products Branding, Region and Country Icon

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1. INTRODUCTION

The products of batik clothing exist in regions in Indonesia that are generally designed and have motifs that reflect the cultural values in each respective region. In various studies, it is stated that batik is a cultural heritage of Indonesia or the archipelago which is recognized by the world, namely by the United Nations of Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Primantari & Trihatmoko, 2020; Krisnawati, Sunarni, Indrayani, Sofyan, & Nur, 2019; Sedyono, Mahatma, & Hunga, 2018; Indrayana, Karju, & Yustana, 2016; Rahab, Anwar, & Priyono, 2016; Anwar, Supadi, Rahab, & Afuan, 2013). Culture and culture-containing philosophical values are adopted from the teaching of the kingdoms in each region, such as the Surakarta Kingdom “Mangkunegaran and Kasunanan”, so that Surakarta is nicknamed as the city of batik, or in terms of products, it is known as “batik Solo” (Primantari & Trihatmoko, 2020).

Surakarta, known colloquially as Solo, is a city in Central Java, Indonesia. Surakarta is the formal regional name for the Indonesian government in the province of Central Java, however, in the world of business and social culture, it is more popularly called Solo. The batik industry in Central Java is specifically known in several regions (Sedyono et al., 2018), and one of the largest is in the “ex-Residency” of Surakarta area, Surakarta, as a dense core city in Central Java, and its second city spills considerably into neighboring regencies. Surakarta City and its surrounding regencies, Karanganyar, Sragen, Wonogiri, Sukoharjo, Klaten, and Boyolali, are collectively called the ex-Surakarta Residency. With the birth of the batik industry in Surakarta, the city is often called Solo Batik City.

The research by Primantari and Trihatmoko (2020) directs the marketing of batik clothing products towards the global market. The argument is that the target and segmentation of the types of batik clothing are very broad in Indonesia, so that it has the opportunity to be developed in other countries in the modern economy and today's globalization. The expected achievement is Solo batik dress as an Indonesian icon, instead of other well-known icons in cities/regions in Indonesia. The iconic form is emphasized by a monumental business approach, which is historic and unique, but relevant in the modern age. Batik Solo as an icon of Indonesia is thought to resemble buildings known as regional/city and Indonesian icons, for example, Monas — Jakarta, Tugu and Malioboro — Yogyakarta, Borobudur — Magelang, Jam Gadhang — Bukit Tinggi, and so on (Koran Sindo, 2018). Icons, as well as the meaning of the definition and terminology of nation branding, so far, have been rather difficult to distinguish between national brands, national branding, state brands, state reputation, and state image. In this case, a study on regional and state branding needs to be carried out (Hao, Paul, Trott, Guo, & Wu, 2019; Whitelock & Fastoso, 2007).

The collective empowerment of batik Solo small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with a strategic marketing approach through strengthening brands or called product branding is the focus of this study. The research perspective is taken from the subject, namely batik entrepreneurs.

Product branding based on local wisdom is a new breakthrough for building theory to contribute to the expansion of marketing management and micro, small, and medium enterprise (MSME) business, thus, this is a research gap from the previous research. Batik research in Indonesia in the last decade has focused more on the uniqueness and analysis of the activities of the batik industry. The research by Primantari and Trihatmoko (2020) was only at the stage of compiling the conception of the process of creation of batik enterprises. Krisnawati et al. (2019) described the batik motifs of Banjar City, West Java, namely Ebeg and Pataruman in relation to the traditional dance culture. The results of the research by Sedyono et al. (2018) explained and illustrated the batik-making process. Indrayana et al. (2016) identified handicraft goods for the traditional games by utilizing batik-patterned product designs. Rahab et al. (2016) and Riswanto (2021) examined the relationship between core competence, competitive advantage, and the performance of batik SMEs entrepreneurs in Banyumas. Anwar et al. (2013) conducted a SWOT analysis of the Banyumas batik industry regarding their recommendations on promotion strategies.

Marketing issues are critical for MSMEs in general, including batik MSMEs, for example, discussed by Primantari and Trihatmoko (2020) and Anwar et al. (2013). On the other hand, a product appeal is a strategic approach in marketing management regarding a product mix strategy that will determine the performance of the brand and the product itself (Trihatmoko, 2020). The terminology of product branding through this study can be described, namely, a product brand created by its owner is built using several methods and strategies that are inherent in the core content of the product and brand, starting from the product manufacturing process to marketing to consumers. This branding description shows that marketing problems for MSMEs do not stand alone, but are always related to the limitations of other management aspects and the role of the local or central government in building the national economy. On the other hand, the phenomenon and empowerment of MSMEs in the batik sector contribute to the regional and national economy as well as to the progress of the MSMEs business. The question is how and what is the branding of batik products as a strategic approach to achieve success to become the region and country icon?

This study attempts to uncover the phenomenon of product branding that is typical of Solo, which focuses on describing and giving an overview of the theory of product branding. The theorizing result is a strategic approach to contribute to the expansion of the concept of equity and the empowerment of MSMEs, universally. The practice of product branding has implications for the regional and national economy, so that it is relevant to the interests of local and central governments, MSME management, social culture in a sustainable and well-established manner as an Indonesian icon in the eyes of the international community. Thus, the product branding practice is certainly following the objectives of this study to directly benefit the original/typical Solo batik clothing industry.

This study is divided into several sections. Section 1 is the introduction which discusses the relevance and problems of the study. Section 2 contains a literature review that focuses on the theoretical basis used in this study, to examine theories relevant to product branding and marketing management, from branding activities to outcomes. This is followed by Section 3 which describes the research methodology. Furthermore, Section 4 is the core of the study that presents the research results. Section 5 discusses the comparison of research results with previous theories and research. Section 6 is the conclusion, which summarizes the main points of the findings along with recommendations for stakeholders, limitations of the study, and directions for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The product branding perspective is an activity of entrepreneurs in implementing marketing strategies. Various kinds of entrepreneurial strategy decisions reflect their characteristics that are built over time or theoretically called entrepreneurial behavior. Theory of planned behavior (TPB) as a foundation for entrepreneurial behavior forms the entrepreneurial protection, intention, behavior control, and subjective norms to attitude and personality (Primantari & Trihatmoko, 2020; DeMaria, Sundstrom, Faria, Saxon, & Ramos-Ortiz, 2019; Trihatmoko & Harsono, 2017; Bujor & Avasilcai, 2016; Phuong & Hieu, 2015; Jakopec, Miljković Krečar, & Sušan, 2013; Ajzen, 1991). Entrepreneurial behavior is relevant to innovation or entrepreneurial creativity, in that it concerns management and marketing strategies (Hughes, Hughes, Morgan, Hodgkinson, & Lee, 2021). Product competitive advantage in the market requires creative ideas implemented in the form of innovation as its development (Martins Oliveira, Alves, & Boer, 2017; Acar, Tarakci, & van Knippenberg, 2019).

The derivative of the theory of marketing strategy is relationship marketing, which is structurally depicted in agency theory and channel management (Bergen et al., 1992, Trihatmoko et al., 2018a; Trihatmoko & Novela, 2021). However, in the context of marketing MSME products, it is possible to use two approaches, namely direct and indirect channel management or modification of both (Kotler & Armstrong, 2013; Trihatmoko & Novela, 2021; Trihatmoko 2020). The channel management approach and agency theory direct branding activities as strategic marketing related to relationship marketing theory, so that it leads to consumer and business behavior (Trihatmoko et al., 2018b; Rajagopal, 2020; Trihatmoko & Novela, 2021). The main theoretical relationship between the entrepreneurial behavior with consumer and business behavior is an opportunity to be constructed from the entrepreneurial empowerment phenomenon of the original Solo batik. The results of this study are interesting to be used as a discussion and review of the theory of product branding as an icon of a region or country and theoretically describe the starting from branding activity to its outcome.

2.1. Branding activity

The results of research by Primantari and Trihatmoko (2020) show that marketing knowledge for batik entrepreneurs encourages entrepreneurial creativity. This phenomenon is a prelude to a closer look at marketing strategies and creativity in the context of building a brand as a product branding activity. Marketing theory review is very popularly known for its strategic approach, namely marketing mix (4Ps: product, price, place, promotion) (Zineldin & Philipson, 2007; Kotler & Armstrong, 2013; Trihatmoko, Harsono, Wahyuni, & Haryono, 2016; Trihatmoko et al., 2018b; Al Badi, 2018; Purwana, 2019; Trihatmoko, 2020; Trihatmoko & Novela, 2021). The product strategy itself contains brand strategies, namely line extension, brand extension, multi-brand, and a new brand (Nijssen, 1999; Nijssen & Agustin, 2005; Kotler & Armstrong, 2013; Marin, Ruiz De Maya, & Rubio, 2018; Trihatmoko, 2020; Trihatmoko & Novela, 2021). The relevance of product strategies in the context of branding activity is related to pricing strategies and their integration of placement and promotion strategies such as the conception of 4Ps (DelVecchio, 2000; Dawes, 2004; Trihatmoko & Purnamasari, 2019; Iyer, Davari, & Paswan, 2018; Trihatmoko & Mulyani, 2018). The concept of marketing strategy is generally intended to explore business units in large corporate formations; however, this study attempts to reveal its relevance to product marketing from the empowerment of SMEs (Ahonen, 2008).

The theoretical description above illustrates that the exploration of batik entrepreneurial behavior is expected to reveal the content of branding activities with two deepening focuses, namely creativity with marketing strategies to challenge the marketing mix and brand strategies. The implications of creative content and marketing strategy seem to be conveyed by previous literature, namely brand performance, market competition, or both as branding outcomes (DelVecchio, 2000; Hoek, Kearns, & Wilkinson, 2003; Steenkamp & Dekimpe, 2009; Trihatmoko, 2020). Iyer et al. (2018) explain that brand performance is generated by internal branding through process and brand management strategy orientation.

2.2. Branding outcomes

Product branding activities or brand behavior are carried out by brand owners to build brand performance (Hoek et al., 2003). On the other hand, the brand performance itself is related to product competition in the market (Gomez & Rubio Benito, 2008; Ulwan, 2021). Consumer and business markets can provide brand signals, namely global and local brands as well as unbranded products, competing for market share (Strizhakova, Coulter, & Price, 2011). Trihatmoko (2020) explains that consumer perceptions in assessing products are the results of activities in product branding efforts in the market. Consumers and market customers assess brand including attributes, trust, logic, rationality, and relational marketing (Evans & Berman, 1993; DelVecchio, 2000; Hoek et al., 2003; Steenkamp & Dekimpe, 2009; Kotler & Armstrong, 2013; Trihatmoko et al., 2016). Molinillo, Ekinici, and Japutra (2018) suggest that measuring the success of

brand performance uses a strategic tool, namely brand management as a comparison of competing brands.

Consumer and business markets can provide brand signals that are global and local brands as well as unbranded products, competing for market share. The deepening of brand performance in this study consists of three theoretical aspects, namely brand awareness, brand image, and brand reality. The three aspects of product performance are generally the perceptions and assessments of consumers of a product and its brand. Brand awareness is control over risk assessment and product assurance by consumers who become their awareness of the brand and product characteristics (Malik, Ghafoor, & Iqbal, 2013). Consumer behavior is influenced by perceptions and feelings of brand equity which is stimulated by brand image (Zhang, 2015). Brand reality is a consumer assessment of satisfaction with the brand(s) so that they have confidence in the product image (Norouzi, Norouzi, & Ghalandari, 2016; Trihatmoko, 2020). This review directs the relevance of consumer behavior and market competition to brand performance. The target market as demand is related to the marketing mix strategy (Trihatmoko et al., 2018a). The research contribution of Haase, Wiedmann, and Labenz (2018) underlined that the experience of a brand is not forgotten for brand performance, meaning consumer behavior in the market.

Finally, the overall theoretical overview ahead can be summarized as a research framework for uncovering its in-depth themes (see Table 1). The findings of the study are described and discussed with the previous theories, so that the focus is on theorizing the relationship between research themes. Research on product branding does need comprehensive exploration so that the use of qualitative methods will generate new theoretical perspectives (Whitelock & Fastoso, 2007).

Table 1. The theoretical framework of entrepreneurial behavior in branding activities and outcomes

Entrepreneurial behavior	
Branding activities	
• Creativities	• Marketing strategies
• Product development	• Marketing mix and brands
Theorization	
• Brand performance	• Competitive market
• Consumer's perception and valuation	• Consumers and business behavior
Branding outcomes	

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach of this study was phenomenology, and its interpretation was pragmatism. The procedural data were collected by observative exploration and in the first stage, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion (FGD) (Primantari & Trihatmoko, 2020) were used. The data collected in the first stage were analyzed interpretively as an initiative to continue research to enter the second stage. Participants or research informants involved eighty-eight (88) personnel, consisting of entrepreneurs, employees, and batik workers from various batik centers. They are divided

into four (4) groups according to their respective roles, and their behavior was assessed. Exploration and questions targeted at the objects, namely production techniques and processes, environment, style, outcomes, product prices and employee salaries, marketing, and production standards (Primantari & Trihatmoko, 2020).

In the second stage of this study, the confirmability procedure was a general phenomenological observation, so the deepening of the study was carried out through observative stages and practical analysis (Trihatmoko, 2019a; Creswell, 2013; Flik, Steinke, & von Kardoff, 2016). The researchers were given the freedom to interpret phenomena in the field of study to find meanings so that the theoretical direction can be applied pragmatically (Trihatmoko, 2019b; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2016; Creswell, 2013). The criteria for the observed batik products in this study were limited to the types of batik and batik modifications printed and written. This type of product has characteristics and uniqueness so it was seen in early allegations as the basis for a batik fashion icon. The aim is to reveal the batik as a differentiator and coordinator or integrator in the dimensions of the production and marketing process.

The data processing in this study was carried out using a content analysis approach (Trihatmoko, 2019b; Creswell, 2013), from observation notes by focusing on each research theme (Table 2). Content analyst, namely observing the symbols attached to batik and its marketing environment. Then combined with a domain analysis approach (Trihatmoko, 2019a) to describe phenomenological elements in the form of habits, patterns, and forms in the marketing management of Solo batik products. The observation procedure is data validation as well as methodologically as a bottom-up step to build a theory from the focus of this research (Trihatmoko, 2019b; Creswell, 2013). Observations on the consumer and government side, as well as facts and symbols, are confirmability and dependability methods to ensure initial data is supported by valid events (Trihatmoko, 2019a; Flik et al., 2016; Taylor et al., 2016).

This methodological approach has been implemented so that it can be seen from the practical interpretation that it cites "the phenomenon of product branding". The results of the research are directly discussed with previous theories so that the reconstruction of the theory provides scientific insights into marketing and entrepreneurship.

4. RESULTS

The results of the study identify and describe branding activities, namely aspects of creativity and marketing strategies by batik entrepreneurs. Activities and marketing in it are supported by the role of the government through its regulations. Creativity about product development is to build brand performance, namely brand awareness, brand image, and brand reliability. Marketing strategy about 4Ps — marketing mix, and brands and extensions related to market competition. The pragmatism interpretation of these findings creates an icon for the region and country for clothing products based on local wisdom, in the context of this study, namely batik.

4.1. Branding activity in batik marketing as a regional icon

The results of the study describe branding activities, namely the relevance between creativity and marketing strategy. These are two different variables but both influence each other in the interests of the batik business. Creativity and marketing management are an essential part of entrepreneurial behavior, which is described in more detail in terms of branding activities.

4.1.1. Creativity

Creativity is product development by designing new-variation motifs and product modes while maintaining traditional cultural values and local wisdom. This description identifies that the characteristics of the original Solo batik are patterns (carvings) that have philosophical, and even magical, values for the wearer, apart from generally being the wearer's appearance.

"The development is done by still maintaining the traditional way, although it needs modification, such as by printing and writing manually. The design pattern is obedient to the types of patterns that have a divine value from generation to generation. Such philosophical or magical features, for example, Klithik, Parang Barong, Parang Kusumo, Salak Seeds, Slopes, Kawung, Truntum, and/or other designations" (Interviewee 1).

"In fact, in the traditional events, the use of this batik pattern has its own place and situation, both for the wearing actor or the cultural event. However, in the context of batik, the pattern is used for formal and general events according to the taste of the wearer. For example, weddings, state meetings, seminars, and other formal meetings, so that the philosophical element is neglected. The users concentrate on appropriateness like modeling, color, taste, and style. For people who understand batik patterns, they can directly identify these patterns, but those who do not understand can only mention the value of appropriateness" (Interviewee 2).

The phenomenology of these features has not yet been highlighted as one of the product branding factors to strengthen the claim of the authenticity of batik Solo. Consumers and potential consumers need to be educated on their knowledge since batik is still a sheet of cloth to a fashion product.

"Batik patterns are often only communicated to the potential customers by sales supervisors, even if consumers ask them. The product brand is only the ownership of the brand attached to the fashion product, the style is not stated. Many of the batik clothing fabrics are plain without a brand, most of the brands are displayed on shop name boards. Likewise, when consumers buy ready-made or cloth batik they are given packaging in the form of store-branded bags or product brands, or even mostly unbranded semi-written batik" (Interviewee 2).

The contextual of batik entrepreneurial creativity is about product variations and modes. There is no obstacle to entrepreneurial creations since the batik motifs and modifications are limited.

"Written batik motifs are generally made of only one pattern and design, thus, the price is relatively expensive. The users of premium written batik, before buying a product, tend to confirm their motive to avoid

the inconvenience of 'when' they are suddenly used by someone else. Entrepreneurs make more of the same motif only for a twin set between husband and wife, and this is relative to the fabrics so that the model will be seen by the consumer himself. In this case, batik entrepreneurs continue to be required to carry out variety and fashion creativity when finishing products before they are imaged or written" (Interviewee 3).

4.1.2. Marketing strategy

The results of the study identified that the essence of marketing strategy is the marketing mix. These findings contain the brand strategy and its extension. In the context of strategic management, it shows that the external party that plays a direct role in the branding strategy is the local government.

Marketing mix

The description of the creativity findings above also confirms that the 4Ps-marketing mix approach has been carried out by batik entrepreneurs. The whole 4Ps strategy that is directly related to the product branding can be diluted from its strategic phenomenology. All aspects of the marketing mix, are shown by distribution and promotion channels, as well as the price competitiveness of craftsmen outside the city of Solo, so that trade is concentrated in the city of Solo.

"It is quite clear that the creativity about the patterns and packaging of batik cloth or clothing products is a product strategy. The development of a pattern by its uniqueness has consequences for price subjectivity. A batik product of the same quality may have a different price from one brand to another. The well-known 'X' brand can sell for 1.5-2 times the price of the relatively unbranded 'Y' brand. A similar condition also happens to their store branding, so that the store brand and the product packaging are different in the price levels.

The strategy for placing products is massive in Solo, where there is a very well-known shopping center and the largest in ASEAN for traditional-based clothing trading, namely Klewer Market. In the development of the last ten years, the Beteng Trade Center is also a batik center. Besides that, the craftsmen complex or batik village, Laweyan, and around Klewer Market itself is also popular for the customers. The customers can find the product of batik directly in the area.

These trade centers are also a promotional event, almost every outlet compares their shop to the batik brand they trade. The development of digital technology also increases or expands the product distribution network. New and capable entrepreneurs take advantage of the digital applications by large start-ups in Indonesia, so that apart from the distribution, it is certainly a promotional strategy. Batik Solo is very easy to be recognized and found through the internet search" (Interviewee 4).

Brand and extension

The use of the brand in the clothing product category perceives clothing accessories. The use of brands for categories outside of clothing actually has wide opportunities, but only a few are exploited.

The brand strategy is shown by several brand extensions with product categories/types outside of clothing.

“For example, the completeness of men’s clothing, such as a batik tie and for women, such as scarf, veil, or others. However, in general, the brand is only attached to branded products, while others are without the brand. There are many brands for different categories, for example, small or large bag work, children’s toys, pillowcases, bed covers, and other household accessories. Most recently, during the COVID-19 epidemic, there was a medical device category, namely masks. The brand extension strategy in this way is similar to the line extension, where only branded products include the brand in their products” (Interviewee 5).

Governments

The Government of Solo (Surakarta) has a strategic role in making the city an icon of Indonesia with the nickname the city of batik. City government policies, central government, including corporations, also support the branding strategy of products made by batik MSMEs.

“The Solo City Government has an annual event called the batik festival, ‘only in 2020 it will not be

held due to the COVID-19 situation’. Klewer Market and Benteng Trade Center were built/revitalized to become batik shopping centers that provide convenience for visitors. Product billboards from major companies display batik graphics on their promotional designs. The outlets and accessories at Solo Airport (Boyolali region) give the impression that the regional product is batik” (Interviewee 6).

“On the national batik day which has been proclaimed by the central government, it becomes the spirit of the people to kayak by wearing batik clothes. The Surakarta Regional Government and surrounding areas, as well as national government, used to cultivate their employees wearing batik clothes every Friday. This practice has been followed by the company and institutional employees, and they also make batik uniforms, even though they are not written batik” (Interviewee 7).

The positive impact of sharing these government policies is that batik entrepreneurs are increasingly developing and sustainable. The findings and future discussions confirm that the original Solo product branding activities and the implementation of the marketing strategy are fully supported by the role of the government (see Table 2).

Table 2. Componential analysis of the theme from the process of branding activities to the outcome (Part 1)

Themes	Creativities	Marketing strategies	Governments	Consumer and business behavior	Consumer perception and evaluation
Creativities	The characteristics of batik entrepreneurial behavior are creativity in developing products and having a competitive marketing strategy.	The batik pattern is targeted at the market segment. The price considers the cost of production, product quality, and style as well as business profit expectations per product item. Product promotion and branding are carried out simultaneously with the placement of product displays in stores.	The government provides business infrastructure support, namely licensing, equipment, training, and others that support the empowerment of batik entrepreneurs.		Every product development creativity is intended to increase customer satisfaction which is about product brand awareness, image, and reliability.
Marketing strategies	A productive attitude of entrepreneurs and employees in developing designs and patterns of batik products. Creativity in product development is carried out to fulfill the marketing mix, brand, and extension strategies.	All strategic elements of the marketing mix are applied in marketing batik products. In terms of product development, among them diversify product categories and by brand.	The government organizes regular batik contests and exhibitions. Buildings and public places are equipped with accessories with batik nuances, pictures, provision of batik market centers, maintenance of batik villages.	The competition in the batik market in the city of Solo is very tight in terms of price and product quality as well as product placement in outlets and promotions. The dynamics of competition continues to encourage marketing strategies, including online systems.	
Consumer perception and evaluation	Each product from each manufacturer has a characteristic design, color, or pattern, even though the type of batik pattern is under the same name including marked with the brand name of each manufacturer.			Buyers of batik from local, national, and international consumers or traders. Each store has regulars or new customers but customers also often switch to other stores to find a particular brand according to their purchasing plans/options.	Every consumer and batik trader has experience with a product and its brand. Cognitively they have their own perception and assessment of the product purchased or observed in the buying process.

Table 2. Componential analysis of the theme from the process of branding activities to the outcome (Part 2)

Themes	Creativities	Marketing strategies	Governments	Consumer and business behavior	Consumer perception and evaluation
Consumer and business behavior		The price structure is set, according to the amount and place of purchase, for consumers or traders. The basis is product quality and brand fame as well as product variations, sizes, types, categories, and others.		Batik consumers have a wide selection of products that they are interested in, they visit famous shops in the city of Solo. Consumers tend to move from one store to another to find the product of their choice. Likewise, batik traders (businesses) also seek supplies of goods from various manufacturers and types or styles of batik.	The performance of each product brand from consumer perceptions and assessments makes product competition intense. Batik consumers and traders have many choices of competitive products.
Icon				Buyers or users of batik tend to say batik Solo, and then mention the brand and type. Traders outside the city of Solo at the time of offering to consumers, also commonly refer to batik Solo or batik from other cities that they sell.	Batik consumers and traders or the general public know that Solo is a batik city in Indonesia. Those who are new to it will feel it when they arrive at the airport, train station, bus station, and on their way into the city. Consumers who love batik already know very well some of the selected brands, and the manufacturer or the place where the shop is located.

4.2. Branding outcomes in batik marketing as a regional icon

Outcomes of branding activities are product fame in the eyes of national and international markets. The market is identical with customers and consumers in competition to buy products of interest, so the results of this study highlight the behavior of consumers and customers as a business market. They are decisive in assessing product and brand performance in the market.

4.2.1. Consumer and business behavior

The decision of the consumer to buy batik is due to the stimulant phenomenon of collective marketing strategies, as described in the findings above. That is, the results of branding activities are firstly the success of products in the clothing market or the textile sector. However, how much the market share of batik products among clothing products, in general, cannot be identified in this study. Observation of the batik market itself can be described through consumer behavior, including business markets or traders' behavior.

Local market

Original Solo batik can be considered as the market leader in the local market in the city of Surakarta. Although, it is rather difficult to distinguish between the yields of producers in the Surakarta area or other regions, namely Sragen, Karanganyar, Sukoharjo, Wonogiri, Boyolali, and Klaten. The batik entrepreneur from outside the city of Surakarta

generally follows the Solo style in designing the batik, since historically it is an area within a kingdom of Kasunanan or Mangkunegaran. In this context, the product can be claimed as the original Solo batik.

National market

"Original Solo batik enters the competition for national clothing commodities based on regional culture. Each of these regional characteristics encourages competition in the batik market in Indonesia. Urban people will, of course, tend to be loyal to batik brands from their regions, however, many also want to use the original batik from other regions as a fashion collection or build a sense of nationalism" (Interviewee 8).

International market

"Some foreign tourists visiting Indonesia buy batik as memory or wear it when they are in the area where they tour. Similarly, they may purchase local clothing in other countries of their destination. The common behavior that can be ascertained is Indonesian people who are living in other countries or abroad, they often order batik to be sent to them there. Institutions in Solo often give souvenirs to foreign guests who attend seminars or government visits" (Interviewee 9).

4.2.2. Consumer ratings/valuation and perceptions

The shopping pattern for batik by local consumers tends to be loyal to the product brand or store brand. Out-of-town consumers tend to prefer

shopping centers, thus, they may be loyal to brands or initiate new branding preferences. Commonly, their experience of the brand will make their future loyalty when continue for buying the products, meaning that they have a value of trust in the brand or brand relativity.

4.2.3. Brand performance

Brand awareness and brand image, brand reliability is brand performance. Perception and consumer assessment of product brands by physically comparing the quality of products that compete in the market.

“Consumer behavior at the store always holds the product, observes the pattern, identifies the brand, evaluates the colors and patterns, and then most importantly identifies the price. This was done for various products in the store. In stores that have their own product brands, consumers move their place to look for alternatives to other stores as a comparison of product quality and price” (Interviewee 10).

4.2.4. Icon

Solo as a batik city is not an exclusive icon in Indonesia. Batik Pekalongan and Batik Yogyakarta can be called the icon of the city, including batik in areas in Indonesia. The claim of the batik city cannot be separated from the willingness of the government to compare the city through infrastructure and cultural development policies, and batik contests.

Such practice has been carried out by the local government in Surakarta (Solo).

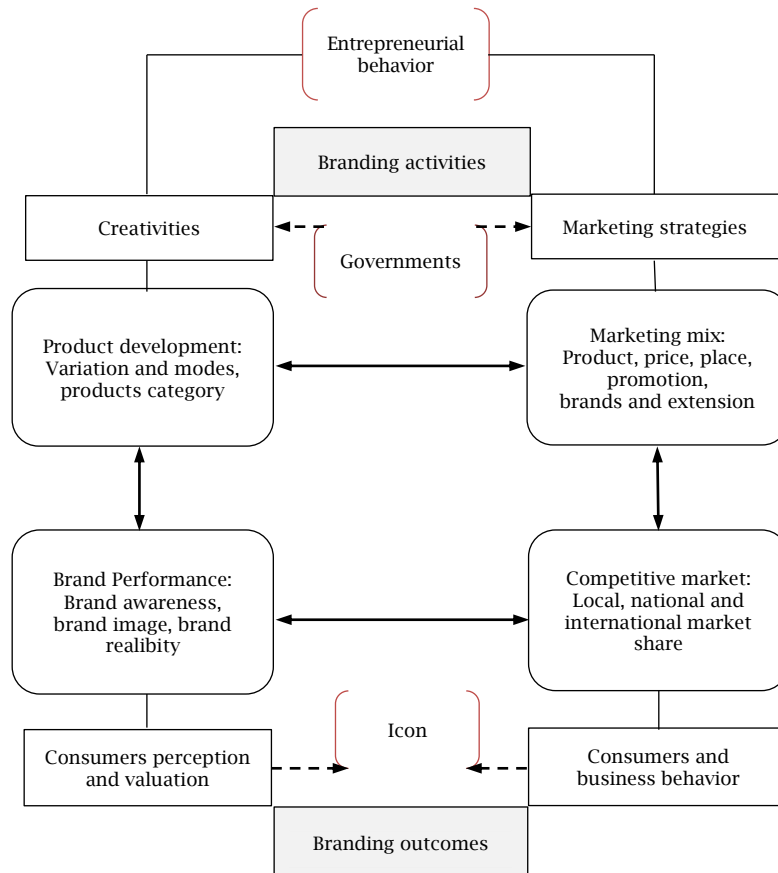
In general, Solo and several other regions have many batik entrepreneurs. The wealth of local wisdom products has made Indonesia known to the world as the largest batik producer. In this perspective, the original batik of Solo is called the icon of batik in Indonesia. That is, the success of branding batik products from Solo has become a symbol of fame, namely regional and country icons.

4.3. Conceptual proposition

The findings of the study in describing the phenomenon of branding of original Solo batik clothing products above are per the research framework (see Table 1). Theoretically, it can be formulated as theorizing of this research, so that the construction is as shown in Figure 1. The construction of branding theory is divided into two main theoretical areas in business and marketing, namely entrepreneurial behavior versus consumer and business behavior.

The result of pragmatism interpretation shows that the *icon* variable is the achievement of the conception of entrepreneurship and product marketing. The theoretical findings indicate that the regional and country icons of the products on the market are supported by government regulations through a long and continuous process on the object.

Figure 1. The purpose of products branding theories, like region and country icon



5. DISCUSSION

Product branding building is proposed as a universal theory in entrepreneurial management and marketing management. This theory contributes to the expansion of marketing management in building from regional icons to state brands in regions that have certain advantages and product characteristics. The paradigmatic product branding theory also contributes to the context of strategic marketing for large corporations, by releasing governmental and iconic aspects or variables. For example, many of the automotive, clothing, food and beverage, or other industries are very well-known and have formed a country icon as a producer of these products.

The theoretical building shows the novelty of the results of this study, namely showing the complexity of business and marketing theory, although, if viewed partially, it has been known from the previous literature. Each theory can be reconfirmed through the following discussion. The aim is to support the understanding that consumer and business behavior includes social and cultural dimensions, therefore the application of marketing strategies is developed (Rajagopal, 2020), with the concept of branding in this study.

Mindrut, Manolica, and Roman (2015) provide solutions for developing creativity for entrepreneurs, namely products and packaging, emotions in order to strengthen the brand image. These findings suggest that the packaging of cloth or apparel products needs to be branded with a symbol or description of the pattern as well as the name of the area of Solo. This creativity can stimulate consumer emotions about brand image and brand awareness that complement the product quality attributes (Zhang, 2015; Mindrut et al., 2015; Malik et al., 2013). Theoretically, the completeness of the product packaging and its symbol design are attributes of product quality (Trihatmoko, 2020; Kotler & Armstrong, 2013). The results of the research conducted by Primantari and Trihatmoko (2020) identified technical constraints in the production process, namely the natural weather factor "rain or heat". The ability of the craftsmen or workers to come up with the latest design ideas must be properly controlled to ensure product quality. This finding explains that the productivity for the variance of batik fabrics and clothing fashions is sustainable creativity, so that the branding of the authentic batik Solo product becomes brand awareness by the consumers. Entrepreneurial creativity in dealing with obstacles requires regulatory support and other resources by the government (Acar et al., 2019); in this case, the Surakarta government has done this.

The results showed that the marketing strategy as a factor related to entrepreneurial creativity theoretically re-explains the marketing mix and brand strategy from the previous literature. Product placement strategy is a form of relationship marketing between business actors or what is called the business market in the batik trade sector (Bergen et al., 1992; Trihatmoko et al., 2018a; Trihatmoko & Novela, 2021). The brand strategy applied by entrepreneurs for their product brands is line extension and brand extension (Nijssen, 1999; Nijssen & Agustin, 2005; Kotler & Armstrong, 2013; Trihatmoko, 2020; Trihatmoko & Novela, 2021).

The brand strategy applied by entrepreneurs for their product brands is line extension and brand extension (Nijssen, 1999; Nijssen & Agustin, 2005; Kotler & Armstrong, 2013; Trihatmoko, 2020; Trihatmoko & Novela, 2021). The study findings theoretically agree with Al Badi (2018) that all elements of the marketing mix have a significant effect on competitive advantage.

The role of the government has a direct interest in advancing batik entrepreneurship as well as for the advancement of the tourism sector. The role of the government in such an approach to economic development is a common phenomenon in various regions and countries, especially those oriented towards tourist destinations (Saraniemi & Ahonen, 2008). This also explains Primantari and Trihatmoko's (2020) research findings that the role of government is very important to create entrepreneurial creativity. The branding of original Solo batik products, like the batik business center, is a tourist destination, so that it can appear as one of the icons of the country and region concerned (Saraniemi & Ahonen, 2008; Hao et al., 2019; Whitelock & Fastoso, 2007; Koran Sindo, 2018).

The discussion about the batik market is per the behavioral theory. However, other phenomena, namely about creativity and competition, show that each region begins to have its own characteristics as the authenticity of products from their respective regions ("4 desa pusat batik, mutiara tersmebunyi Klaten," 2018; "Batik Wonogiren," 2019). Almost all regions in Indonesia have batik patterns with their respective philosophical values, thus, it is known as Batik Nusantara (Primantari & Trihatmoko, 2020). The discussion on the theme of competition above remind the theory that consumer behavior and business or the purchasing decision process are related to their dependence on the marketing strategy stimulants by marketers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2013; Trihatmoko et al., 2016). Satisfaction of consumers and batik traders will be reflected in them by providing the perceptual evaluations, in this context, it is about brand awareness, brand image, and brand reliability (Malik et al., 2013; Zhang, 2015; Norouzi et al., 2016; Trihatmoko, 2020). This phenomenon shows that competitor factors will also determine brand performance, in addition to the main thing, namely the physical quality and price of the product itself. Trihatmoko (2020) has stated that product performance and market competition determine purchasing decisions. The relationship between the marketing mix and brand performance (brand image) through market competition. This discussion is per the findings of Purwana (2019) and Nupus and Ichwanudin (2021) that the customer's purchase intention is significantly influenced by brand image. The review explains the context of consumer and business behavior regarding the relationship between brand performance and market competition as perception and consumer responses (Haase et al., 2018). Therefore, purchase intention is related to the brand extension strategy (Marin et al., 2018; Iyer et al., 2018).

The discussion of the results of this study has practical implications for government management and entrepreneurship themselves as well as for the public. The policy of the Surakarta City Government is to be consistent with playing

an active and proactive role in branding the city of batik as well as efforts to build a regional economic empowerment system. Batik business units need to be reexamined for their possibility of becoming a collective and inclusive economic force, for example strengthening businesses with a cooperative format and towards a Murakabi corporation (Trihatmoko, 2018).

Product branding with a city icon approach has implications for the cultural nationalism of a region, in this context the Surakarta Region. The role of the regional and central government has a direct interest in the economy based on the empowerment of cultural values and their unity. Thus, the general implication is to re-energize people in loving and continuing the local and national traditions and culture.

As a result, local regional products have developed into a wealth of Indonesian icons, and one of them is batik clothing products in the city of Solo. The creation of a policy and strategy from various sides of both business and community clusters that provide accurate representation with national coverage and global references, thus inspiring clothing originating from batik.

6. CONCLUSION

Creativity and collective marketing strategies by batik entrepreneurs for their product brands require the government's role to build the icon of the city of batik as a branding activity. Creativity and marketing strategies have a direct impact on icons in a sustainable manner but are highly dependent on market competition and brand performance. Brand performance is determined by creativity and the competitive situation of local, national, and international markets. Thus, the original Solo batik became Solo and Indonesian icon, awakened by the behavior of entrepreneurs and government support as well as consumer behavior and business market behavior.

The conclusion from the findings of the batik study is theoretically branding activities with the application of a marketing strategy base, namely the marketing mix and brand extension. This strategy is closely related to entrepreneurial creativity in the interests of product development. The argument is that creativity will result in brand performance and marketing strategies to position products in competition in the market. The dynamics of brand performance and market competition are constantly evolving and interrelated because they involve consumer perceptions and evaluations and consumer and business behavior. The conclusion shows that creativity and marketing strategy are the essence of entrepreneurial behavior, in turn, the results are determined by consumer and business behavior, and consumer perceptions and valuations. However, product branding activities are

able to successfully build fame as an icon requires the support of local and central governments. The government's role in making regulations and empowering people and entrepreneurs, and manifested in promotional symbols and other advertising events. In the end, product branding by entrepreneurs together with the government's role can be successful in building regional and state icons.

The competitive advantage of the batik couture icon branding recommends its strategic practices, namely: 1) Batik design/manufacturing process as a differentiator. A market-based external advantage that comes from product design-based differentiation, the process, and product motif design as perceived value for its users. 2) Design as a coordinator or integrator. The internal competitive advantage of hand-written batik/alusan comes from a combination of unique, invisible, difficult to imitate organizational processes and their resources.

Entrepreneurs and the government are encouraged to use this product branding theory so that the original Solo batik is getting stronger in the traditional clothing and convection markets. The public in Indonesia is advised to love clothing products with traditional values so that product consumption increases. The multiple impacts of community behavior as consumers are thus contributing to the advancement and welfare of MSMEs, both for producers and traders.

The limitation of this study is that the product branding theory is built with a qualitative method. In addition, the results have not fully confirmed the need for marketing traditional products based on local wisdom on the producer and seller side as well as on the consumer demand side. Finally, the object of entrepreneurship in this study is limited to the Solo batik business. Thus, a quantitative study is suggested to be done in the future to carry out its theoretical test. However, it is necessary to select reconstructed variables to form certain conceptions as derivatives of branding theory. Qualitative researchers can also adopt the branding theory to explore the business object of non-batik SMEs, and more broadly on the object of products from large industries. This study was observational and pragmatic in nature, so that the next applied research is suggested to be the focus of the researchers to optimize the regional and the national economic empowerment. This opportunity is very open, because there are many products based on local wisdom in various regions, in every country in the world. The importance of these further research suggestions also reflects that product branding is not merely an icon of the region and the country but as empowerment and development of the national economy. The expected academic target is that marketing science continues to develop and contribute to economics universally.

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