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### Creative Technique Strategy Based on the Technique of *Tie Dye* and *Smock* Using Natural Colouring to Improve the Performance of the Craftsmen of Written Batik in Semarang

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**Abstract:** Continuous creativity and innovation will produce a unique and specific product which is always different from other similar products. Until recently, not many people knows the batik motifs using the technique of tie dye ranging from the simplest motifs such as jumputan (smock) or the complex ones with their smock technique that can produce interesting color effects.

With the beauty and uniqueness of the motifs that can be produced by the development of one of batik staining and fabric coloring techniques using natural dyes produce unique motif effects which are expected to provide more environmentally friendly alternative colors. Then, it is necessary to disseminate them to the community in the form of information and training to make Batik motifs with the technique of tie dye combined with smock technique. The community empowerment based on the potential and ability requires a practical skill that can be developed into a form of creative effort that has not been done by many others.

The need for training and assistance for the business groups was to sustain the business they pioneered by providing skills in the development of creative techniques in products as well as in production processes such as motif design using tie dye, smock technique, and quilting techniques.

**Keywords:** *Tie Dye Technique, Smock Technique, Natural Mangrove Dye, Bixa*

#### INTRODUCTION

The competitive advantages in a product will increase the profit that can provide high benefits to an organization. The higher the benefits provided, the higher the value to be generated in the product. In this case, a special specification that is beneficial to customers is supported by One Village One product (OVOP). The concept of One Village One product (OVOP) is a regional potential development approach in a region to produce a unique global class product of a local area by utilizing local resources. One village may

be expanded to Sub-District, Regency/ City, or other territorial units in accordance with the potential and scale of business economically.

Batik industry is a business activity oriented to customer satisfaction on the product's quality and image. It is also required to show more and more motifs designed so that customers do not move to other businesses. It is a challenge for batik industry to keep customers in the midst of intense competition. Therefore, it makes efforts to improve creative techniques through the motifs and product quality appropriately to the needs and tastes of ever changing customers. Self-Efficacy as part of social capital for individuals needs to be developed. The dimension is a confident and challenging type of person, a person who believes in his or her competence and believes to manage multiple resources to meet the challenges faced. People like this usually like to find a target for themselves and even choose a difficult job rather than an easy one. The results of the investigation by Fred and Denison (2000) indicate that psychological capital has a positive effect on performance and work environment.

The research of Tjahjaningsih (2012) resulted in a finding that successfully explained that the performance of batik SMEs in Central Java Province can be achieved by improving the orientation of the excellence of specific creative techniques. That is, the creativity of new products must be a newness and meaningfulness. The model developed used new product development strategy, production process, and use of new technology to accelerate new production process with cost efficiency objective. Creativity is more ability performed by individuals/ organizations, so it is the ability to create something new covering ideas/ insights/ real works which are relatively different. Thus, creativity basically refers to the behavior of the one with the power of creation or the ability to create a new product.

Wolff and Timothy (2006) and Paladino (2007) state that the superiority of new product development gives success to organizational performance. The creative product of batik is one form of the products from creative industries. Creative product development is needed for companies to stay afloat and able to lead to improving organizational performance. The research of Tjahjaningsih (2012) on the SMEs of batik cluster in Central Java Province, Indonesia, shows that the benefits of new product development influence organizational performance. Creative product development is part of the excellence of specific creative techniques for an organization to be in a position to prioritize the benefits of new product development. The further research of Tjahjaningsih et al. (2015) provides the findings that the higher the development of creative products, the more positive the impact on organizational performance. Based on the findings in the field, it is found that the way to develop an interesting batik motif is by making the motifs as it is in the nature, making a combination of motifs and colors, motif innovation, experiment in motif design, finding patterns, and is encouraged to try new motifs.

One of the efforts to develop creative and innovative works is related to the design of batik motif that must be accepted by the market by not leaving the hallmark of product's uniqueness. The presence of the excellence of specific creative techniques is proven to improve organizational performance. By various creative techniques of making batik motif starting from written, stamped, printing, and free hand painting batiks, the tie dye technique is the creative technique on the process of making batik motifs which is most easily done and developed. The motif designs resulted from dyeing techniques can vary widely in which the manufacturing process can utilize the materials which are easily obtained at cheap price.

Tie dye batik in Java Island, Indonesia, is known by the name of *Jumputan* batik motif. In Japan, it is known as *Shibori* technique as part of the creative technique in the process of making batik motif. Tie dye

batik does not need the mastery of good design, and it only requires a sense of art as well as the folding and binding techniques which are very easy to do. The technique can be made in the household and industrial scale as an alternative in batik making techniques.

Tie dye is a way or technique to decorate fabric formed through a blocked dyeing process. The creative technique forms shades by covering the parts of fabric that do not want to be stained by the dyeing process for coloring. The tie dye used can use rope, yarn, and rubber as a coloring block or barrier. With creativity and continuous innovation, it will produce a unique and specific product which is always different from other similar products. Until recently, many people who have not much knowledge on batik using tie dye technique ranging from the simplest motifs such as *jumputan* to the complex one with folding technique.

The beauty and uniqueness of the motif that can be produced and developed as one of the techniques of batik motif design are necessary to be disseminated to the public both in the form of information and training to make batik using tie dye and smock techniques combined with mangrove natural dye. The aim of the study was to provide an understanding of the manufacture of batik that can be given a touch of alternative techniques in the design of batik motifs produced by tie dye and smock techniques and the use of environmentally friendly, easily obtained, and cheap batik dye that can be utilized to improve the performance of written batik craftsmen.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Process Innovation

In general, the innovation dimension is divided into product and process innovations. In order that innovation is sustainable and able to support company performance, an innovation strategy is required (Terziovski, 2002). Terziovski (2002) classified innovation strategies into three groups: (1) radical, (2) incremental, and (3) integrated. Radical is a strategy that refers to innovation the activities that never exist before, drastically change the establishment, and produce new products or processes which are different from before. Incremental is a gradually evolving strategy and improves existing business products or processes with innovative steps. Integrated combines two previous approaches of radical and incremental in addition to discovering new things (invention), and then integrated strategy also encourages innovation by developing from the existing ones.

Broadly, product innovation shows the changes in the final products or services offered by an organization, while process innovation shows the changes in the way a company produces the final products or services (Camison-Zomoza, Lapiedra-Alcami and Boronat-Navarro, 2004). Product and process innovations produce new products faster than those done by competitors, giving companies the possibility to improve organizational performance. Process innovation can be performed through various creative techniques which are always developed continuously. The research of Tjahjaningsih (2012) investigated the advantages of specific creative techniques/ orientation on the advantage of specific creative technique that can be produced when batik SMEs successfully build, maintain and develop a variety of specific advantages as a result of organizational strategic assets.

## **Psychological Capital**

Psychological Capital, commonly known as PsyCap, is a combination of human capital concepts (O'Leary *et al.*, in Luthans *et al.*, 2006) and social capital (Adler and Kwon, 2002, in Luthans *et al.*, 2006). The concept of PsyCap on an individual level aims to foster individual growth and performance. The major keys of PsyCap are: (1) based on positive psychological paradigm (the importance of positive spirit and human strength), (2) including the psychological state based on positive organizational behavior, (3) beyond human and social capitals, (4) involving investment and development to re-generate performance improvements and to result in competitive advantage (Luthans *et al.*, 2006).

Robbins (1996) explains psychological capital as a shared perception adhered by the members of an organization and a system of shared meaning. Psychological capital is a mutual agreement of the members in an organization or agency to facilitate the emergence of a wider agreement for individual interests. The virtue of psychological capital is the control and direction in shaping human attitudes and behavior that involves themselves in an organization's activities. Psychological Capital (Luthans, 1997) describes a major role in determining success with Resiliency, Self-Efficacy, Hope, and Optimism. Based on the matters, they make someone to be able to step forward with positive confidence and to reach all successes.

## **Entrepreneur**

The core of entrepreneurship within the framework of competence includes functional, social and entrepreneurship in general. Functional competence determines what should be known and able to do both the knowledge and skills possessed to perform their roles effectively. Social competence refers to the skills required by interacting with others, such as teamwork, communication, leadership and the ability to create the networks out of the business. Entrepreneurial competence performs conceptual skills to create business models and set goals, strategies, priorities and operational plans.

The studies of Gilmore, Audrey; Carson, David and O'Donnell, Aodheen (2004) explain that the core competencies for entrepreneurs in small businesses are included in the categories of (1) knowledge, (2) experience, (3) communication, and (4) judgment. Recently, the core competencies for entrepreneurs have developed into an experiential knowledge model by entrepreneurs through the development of individual learning/ individual's experiential learning. Competence has been defined as a fundamental characteristic for someone who produces in an effective or superior performance (Armstrong, 2006). Nakhata, Chinintorn (2007) describes 10 entrepreneurial competencies that include (1) opportunity ability, (2) ability in relationship, (3) analytical ability, (4) ability to innovate (innovative), (5) operational ability, (6) ability of human side, (7) strategic ability, (8) ability to commit, (9) learning, and (10) personal strength.

## **Performance**

Gibson (1997) defines performance as a result of work related to organizational goals such as quality, quantity and work efficiency. Work quality is assessed from the responsibilities and initiatives possessed by individuals in completing their tasks, while work quantity can be assessed from the work achievement target and timeliness in the completion of work. Work efficiency is assessed from the speed and initiatives in the completion of tasks. According to Minner (1999), performance is defined as a level of an individual's needs as the expectations for the work he does. Each individual's expectation is judged by role. When the

role played by an individual is not known clearly or appears to be vague, each individual does not know exactly what he expects. Performance is also a result achieved by someone, which is related to the task and role he does.

Organizational performance is enhanced when there is synergy among the elements within a system. The complementary factors of a quality system will improve the elements of both financial and non-financial aspects that operate to improve performance. Theoretically, there are many methods used by organizations to achieve and develop organizational performance. Many factors influence organizational performance, namely external business environment factors such as government policy, legal and political forces, technology, resources, competitors, customer's taste and organizational management related to products and the creative techniques. Globalization, economic conditions, and technological changes can also affect organizational performance. In addition, industrial environment also plays a role in accelerating environmental changes that ultimately also affect organizational performance. The research results of Tjahjaningsih (2014) explain that organizational performance further leads to sustainable competitive advantage to build the competitiveness of the SMEs of Batik Semarang.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Type of Research**

The types of the research were descriptive and explanatory researches. The data source used in the research was primary data sourced from direct respondent.

### **Population and Sample**

Population is a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects with certain qualities and characteristics set by a researcher to be studied and then drawn the conclusion. Samples are part of the number of characteristics owned by a population (Sugiyono, 2004). The population in the research was the craftsmen of written Batik in Joint Business Groups and Public Interest Groups. The research used sampling technique and non-probability sampling (the sampling by not giving equal opportunity to members of population to be sampled). The sampling was purposive sampling in which the selection of a group of subjects was based on certain characteristics or the characteristics considered to be closely related to the characteristics or properties of a previously identified population (Sekaran, 2006). The criterion used by the researchers was the craftsmen who have already produced batik for more than 1 year and were willing to provide the required information.

### **Data and Data Sources**

The data collection in the research was conducted by survey method using questionnaires which were delivered directly to the respondents. The questionnaires were distributed directly with the intent to be able to directly give the questionnaires to the respondents to be completed.

### **Data collection technique**

- A) Documentation; by studying existing books, data and archives in the research sites that have the relevance.

- B) Questionnaires; by distributing questionnaires to the respondents with the questions provided in advance by the researchers.

### **Data Processing Techniques and Data Analysis**

The data processing technique used was descriptive analysis. Descriptive analysis was applied to figure out the general description of the respondents

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Identification of Respondents**

The samples in the research were batik craftsmen in the Joint Business Groups of “Kencono Wungu”, “Sauri”, and “Pedalangan” as well as those in the Public Interest Groups of “Plalangan Makmur”, “Maron”, and “Nongko Sawit” in the Regency and City of Semarang. The Joint Business Groups and Public Interest Groups were developing a pioneering business that can develop Batik and Souvenir to be able to empower the surrounding community to participate in selling the products in tourist attractions so that they can also improve the economy of the surrounding community. However, the products that have been produced today are still limited to making batik cloth and not developed into other products. The motif designs produced are still simple, so it is very hard to be able to compete with well-established batik craftsmen.

The embryo of the business groups emerged because so far they have been unemployed and worked as side workers. With the economic background and income as laborers as well as the efforts to obtain a better livelihood, the groups were established, and then the empowerment of society based on the potential and ability require practical skills that can be developed into a form of creative efforts and has not been made by other people. The pioneering business was at first souvenir production made of fabric waste materials, which was then developed into producing their own batik. It considered the prospect that can be developed by the business groups of batik products. Then, they optimized the products produced from batik cloth into batik fashion products, and the rests were developed into souvenirs.

The number of the questionnaires distributed to batik craftsmen in Semarang was 30 questionnaires. The number of the questionnaires returned and filled out completely was 28 sheets. Based on the data from the 28 questionnaires, which were proper to be processed, various respondent information about the sex, age, length of work , and education was then obtained. The followings are the results of respondent identification based on frequency distribution:

Based on the 35 questionnaires distributed to the respondents, 7 questionnaires returned to the researchers were not filled out due to busyness factor with work routine, so they could not fill the questionnaires given. The questionnaires returned and already filled were 28 questionnaires and could be processed as respondents. In this case, the questionnaires were also made in open questions so that it was expected that the batik craftsmen who filled out the questionnaires could provide an explanation on their opinions on the creative techniques of tie dye and smock using natural colouring, which was the object of the study, and could provide advices and input to the researchers. The followings are the results of respondent identification by sex, education level, age, and income level:

Four out of 28 respondents involved in the study were male (14.3%), while 24 of them (85.7%) were female. It illustrates that the batik craftsmen in the joint business and public interest groups were mostly women.

The 28 respondents involved in the study had a variety of education. 14 out of 28 respondents graduated from high school (50%), eight people (28.6%) graduated from junior high school, and six persons (21.4%) were in other lower level of education. Therefore, it can be seen that the most batik craftsmen in the joint business and public interest groups selected as the samples of research were in the level of education of high school.

Five respondents involved in the study were aged 21-30 years (17.9%), 15 people were aged 31- 40 years old (53.6%), six people were aged 41-50 years (21.4%), and two people were aged older than 51 years old (7.1%). It indicates the age range with the majority in the age of 31 - 50 years as indicated by the percentage that reached 75%.

More than 50% of the respondents answered that the work of batik is a side business other than the work as a housewife. One person earned less than IDR 1,000,000.00 from batik businesses (3.56%), eight people earned between IDR 1,000,000.00 and IDR 3,000,000.00 (28.6%), 14 people earned from IDR 3,000,000.00 to IDR 6,000,000.00 (50%), and those with the income more than IDR 6,000,000.00 were five people (17.9%). It shows that, from the income range, the majority of the craftsmen (50%) earned the income in the range of IDR 3,000,000.00 – IDR 6,000,000.00. Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that females were the most batik craftsmen in the groups of joint business and public interest in the city and regency of Semarang with the most educational level of high school and the majority in the age of 31- 50 years old earning the side income rate of IDR 3,000,000.00 – IDR 6,000,000.00.

### **Business Identification**

The production processes of Semarangan Batik, so far, have used classical ways by which the processes of making batik start from designing the motif, coloring, dyeing, until removing the wax that last from several days to one month (depending on the complexity of the motifs) for 1 (one) piece of batik cloth. It causes high production costs for a sheet of Semarangan batik cloth, and it has the effect on the price of Semarangan Batik which is relatively higher compared to the price of written batik in other more established areas.

The limitations and availability of raw materials that depend those from other areas, advanced batik process skills, and minimal entrepreneurial spirit were the main problems of Semarangan batik craftsmen. Meanwhile, the market demand, attractiveness of batik with its high uniqueness, and the differentiation of batik products make the opportunity for the craftsmen.

The deeper findings related to the problems of Semarangan batik based on the survey and research results conducted by the Research Team from 2013 to 2017 (in science and technology for society and MP3EI of 2015-2017) in batik cluster were indicated by the habit of making batik without considering the existing market needs. It happened because most of Semarangan batik craftsmen were in the growing phase of three to five years. Therefore, their experience and skills have not been been reliable yet. The locations of the craftsmen of written Semarangan batik that scattered in some areas of Semarang caused the lacks of communication, awareness and togetherness among batik craftsmen, and it was one of the obstacles. Although the facilitations had been conducted in the form of coaching, mentoring, training, and

clustering by the government, they can not run optimally because of the lack of mentoring and mapping/ classification according to the potential of the craftsmen.

One effort to develop creative and innovative works was related to the design of Semarangan batik motif that can be accepted by the market by not leaving the hallmark of uniqueness of Semarang and using the method of specific and creative technique excellence which were proven to be able to improve the organizational performance. However, the organizational performance performed so far has not been optimal (Tjahjaningsih *et al.*, 2015)

The Batik Study Center has been established since 2015 as a forum to conduct the research related to batik and to innovate in the form of batik products and innovation of batik making processes. The home business unit of Karya Kriya Batik with the activities to provide assistance to the community about creative techniques in batik making, such as the techniques of tie dye, with the development of creativity, the dyeing techniques using natural dyes, the utilization of natural dyes derived from plant waste were to minimize the cost of production process.

### Creative Technical Assistance Strategy Based on Tie Dye and Smock Techniques

The assistance strategies were implemented for the craftsmen of Semarangan batik using new techniques which can be used as the alternatives in the process of coloring and batik motif. They were usually called tie dye technique, smock technique, and the use of the natural color of mangrove and bixa to produce unique batik product which can be a regional uniqueness.



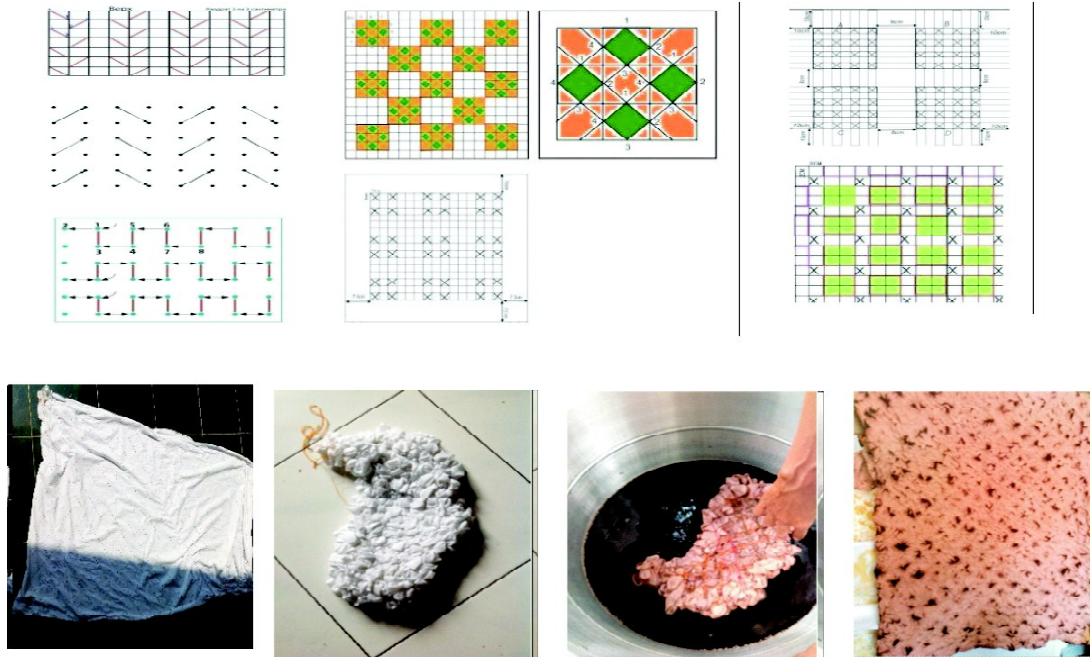
Figure 1.1. Tie Dye Technique

(Source: the writer's documentation, 2015)

Smock technique has long been developed to form motifs by folding in a geometric position. The resulting color effect by combining dyeing and smock techniques produces a unique and interesting color effect. Figure 1.2 shows some smock techniques.

The use of natural color of bixa/ kesumba has been widely used as a red dye on the hair. Bixa use for bright red orange by using dyeing and smock techniques gives a unique and ethnic color effect on batik cloth (figure 1.3).





**Figure 1.2: Smock Technique using Mangrove Dyeing**

*(Source: the writer's documentation, 2016)*



**Figure 1.3: Batik Motif using the techniques and tie dye and Smock with the natural dyeing of Mangrove and BIXA**

*(Source: the writer's documentation, 2016)*

The use of Mangrove is an alternative natural dye because it is environmentally friendly, widely available in coastal areas (not used optimally) which can be used as batik color (brown to dark brown), easy to obtain and cheap, so it can reduce production costs in the process of making batik. Bixa fruit seeds used as a brown color companion from Mangrove can provide the motif effect of two-color combination. The consideration of the use of natural colors combined with tie dye and smock techniques have not been

implemented by many craftsmen, so it is expected that the uniqueness of the resulting motifs can compete to market the batik products of batik cradtsmen in Semarang.

The business groups can produce creative souvenir products from batik cloth into batik products such as fashion accessories, the making of differentiation product made of written batik in the forms of pillowcase, tablecloth, and bed cover using Quilting technique. To achieve the objectives as mentioned above, the solutions given to the craftsmen are as follows:

1. Practicing the basic skills of tie dye technique and tie dye using various materials.
2. Practicing the technique directly and making own samples according to the creativity of each woman.
3. Using natural dyes from mangrove and Bixa plants
4. Developing batik products, not only a piece of batik cloth in the form of fashion, but batik for home decoration, bed cover, 360<sup>0</sup> usage and utilization of batik waste in the form of souvenirs (handycraft)
5. Assistance to see the sustainability of the training that has been obtained and trying to make products by their own creativity and expected to be a superior product combined with other fashion products.

In order that the activities can be well-organized, the assistance strategy was initiated by the socialization in the form of training and followed by training and mentoring activities. The training was divided into several activities which included: the implementation of training activities of batik making using tie dye technique and combined with smock technique to give unique and interesting effects with geometric properties. Computer-assisted tutorials and exploration of model and motif design for the development of written batik, explanation, and direction on the materials of various tie dye techniques can be developed and combined with smock technique. The use of mangrove natural dyes was for the manufacture of differentiation products.

### **Assistance Strategy on the Use of Natural Dyes**

The making of batik motifs using tie dye and smock techniques used natural dyes instead of synthetic dyes. Natural dyes reduce the negative impact of environmental damage due to textile dye affecting soil fertility and water contamination. The utilization of mangrove natural colors that has not been widely used gives the effect of milky brown to dark brown colors. The business groups were ready to produce and develop the products themselves according to market trends and desires.

The motifs resulted from tie dye technique that can be combined with other batik processes, such as stamped batik/ screen printing may give the effects and image design. The members of the business groups could produce batik products with various development motifs using the natural dyes of mangrove and Bixa that resulted in differentiation products of Batik. The use of natural colors was rarely implemented because the knowledge about the process of making colors from plants was mostly unknown, whereas the process and acquisition were easier and cheaper. The techniques of Tie Dye and Smock using the natural dyes of Mangrove and Bixa were found to be the development of art and culture which was beautiful and environmentally friendly.

The Self-Efficacy of the craftsmen was described as confident and fond of challenges, and the people who believe in their competence and are confident of managing diverse resources to meet the challenges they face. It shows that the batik craftsmen were generally able to develop ideas and creativity in various ways based on the respondents' answers as follows: participating the training in the development of business creativity, having the freedom to pour creative styles in batik market, having the freedom to find new creations, having the opportunity to create better motifs, having the opportunity to have added value, having the opportunity on how to properly serve customers, having the opportunity on how to innovate products, having the opportunity on how to innovate with their creative techniques.

In general, the batik craftsmen were quite able to receive suggestions for improvement in various ways based on their respondent's answers as follows: marketing products, maintaining quality, coloring problems, suggestions on the impact of coloring waste, new product design, product manufacturing, marketing and development of new motifs, adding new designs, coloring recipes, customer customer suggestions about products, product motifs and quality, multiplying product variations, and suggestions on production processes.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **Conclusion**

Concerning the achieved results, the following matters can be concluded:

1. Self-Efficacy as part of social capital is seen in confident and challenging individuals, people who believe in their competence, and are confident of managing diverse resources to face the challenges they face so that they can be more creative.
2. The batik motif design that can be a strength for batik craftsmen is important, so it is necessary that the use of all devices that can explore batik motifs is taught to the craftsmen to explore their imagination and design.
3. Assistance strategies for batik craftsmen is necessary to be implemented in a sustainable manner, so the coachings from the city/ regency government of Semarang and the concerned parties are required.
4. The creative techniques of tie dye and smock on the process of motif making are easily developed to produce highly varied and unique motifs.
5. The use of the natural dyes of mangrove and Bixa provides batik alternative colors which are more environmentally friendly, optimizing the utilization of plants, and easily obtained.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the results, the following matters are recommended:

To get the best results, it is necessary to provide an assistance strategy periodically to each group. Besides, evaluation and monitoring of the implementation of training activities and strategy assistance are required to be conducted on a regular basis in an effort to provide sustainable assistance after being trained to see the progress of implementation activities so that the desired results are exactly as the expected ones.

## CLOSING

In closing, the writers thanked the Directorate General of Research and Technology of the Higher Education Department as the funding source for the implementation of the MP3EI research in 2017. Hopefully, the research is useful for the development of written batik craftsmen in Semarang who are still in the position of embryo/ beginner to grow in a higher position, providing stimulus for the craftsmen of the written batik in Semarang to immediately improve themselves to recover the glory of batik in the Dutch colonial era. It also functions as a study material for the governments of Semarang city and Central Java province related to the acceleration of economic development.

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