



# INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION AS A STRATEGY FOR ENHANCING THE GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS OF LOCAL HAND-DRAWN BATIK

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## Article Info

## ABSTRACT

### Keywords:

Cultural Heritage,  
International Recognition,  
Media Coverage,  
Small-Scale Export,  
Wukirsari Batik

This study examined the forms of international recognition within the Wukirsari hand-drawn batik ecosystem. The research identified multiple avenues through which artisans and small-scale producers gained global acknowledgment, including participation in international exhibitions, cooperation with foreign buyers for small-scale exports, coverage by foreign media and digital platforms, and recognition as intangible cultural heritage. Data were collected through qualitative observation and interviews with local batik stakeholders and analyzed using a theory-driven framework that linked recognition practices to social, economic, and cultural dimensions. The findings revealed that international exhibitions enhanced visibility and legitimacy, export cooperation strengthened economic resilience and network ties, media coverage amplified symbolic prestige, and heritage recognition preserved cultural identity while providing global validation. The study concluded that these interconnected forms of recognition collectively contributed to both the sustainability of local craftsmanship and the global positioning of Wukirsari batik. The results provide insights for policymakers, cultural institutions, and small-scale artisans seeking to strategically leverage international platforms for cultural and economic advancement.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Hand-drawn batik is a form of Indonesian cultural expression with high historical, artistic, and economic value. Beside serving as a symbol of cultural identity, hand-drawn batik also serves as a source of livelihood for artisan communities in various regions. One center reputation is Wukirsari Village, Imogiri District, Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region, particularly the Giriloyo area, known as a center for community-based hand-drawn batik using traditional techniques and natural dyes [1].

In recent years, cultural and creative industries have gained increasing attention as drivers of inclusive economic growth, cultural preservation, and community empowerment. Globalization and digital connectivity have expanded market access for cultural products, while simultaneously intensifying competition and standardization pressures within global value chains. In this context, heritage-based creative industries face a dual challenge: engaging with international markets to ensure economic sustainability while preserving cultural authenticity and traditional knowledge. International recognition has emerged as a key mechanism through which local cultural products can gain visibility, legitimacy, and differentiation in global markets, particularly in sectors where symbolic value and cultural meaning play a central role [3], [5].

In recent decades, hand-drawn Wukirsari batik has not only developed as a local cultural product but has also begun to penetrate the international market through various channels such as global exhibitions, trade missions, export collaborations, and digital media-based promotions. This transformation demonstrates that hand-drawn Wukirsari batik is no longer merely within the local economy but has become part of the dynamic global creative industry [2]. However, the process of penetrating the global market is not without challenges, ranging from limited production scale, international quality standards, to the need to build trust and legitimacy among global consumers.

Several previous studies have discussed batik development strategies in Wukirsari and Giriloyo focusing on institutional strengthening, artisan welfare, marketing innovation, and the use of social media and digital marketing [3],[4]. Other studies emphasize the importance of entrepreneurial orientation and differentiation strategies in improving the performance of batik MSMEs in this region [5]. Despite making important contributions, most of these studies still view successful global market expansion as the end result of marketing and institutional strategies, rather than as a strategic process fostered through internal recognition mechanism.

Despite the growing body of literature on creative industries and cultural globalization, existing studies tend to focus on urban creative hubs, large-scale creative enterprises, or national-level policy frameworks. Limited attention has been given to how international recognition operates within community-based and rural creative industries, particularly in the context of traditional crafts such as hand-drawn batik. Moreover, prior research often treats international recognition as an outcome of success rather than as a strategic resource that actively shapes competitiveness and sustainability. This gap highlights the need for in-depth case-based research that examines the mechanisms through which international recognition is generated, internalized, and transformed into long-term advantages at the community level.

In context of increasingly fierce global competition, international recognition plays a strategic role that goes to beyond more symbolic achievement. Participation in international exhibitions, sustainability certification, global media coverage, and appreciation from international actors serve as forms of market signaling that strengthen the credibility, reputation, and added value of hand-drawn batik products in the global market [6]. For the Wukirsari batik community, this international recognition has the potential to be a crucial instrument for distinguishing traditional hand-drawn batik from mass-produced textiles, while also opening access to a premium market segment that values authenticity, sustainability, and cultural value.

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, it provides empirical insights into the role of international recognition in enhancing competitiveness within heritage-based creative industries at the community level. Second, it integrates perspectives from creative economy theory, competitiveness frameworks, and cultural sustainability to offer a more holistic analytical approach. Finally, by focusing on a rural batik-producing community, this research extends the geographical and contextual scope of creative industry studies beyond dominant urban-centered narratives.

However, there remains a research gap regarding how international recognition is concretely utilized as a strategy to increase the competitiveness of local, community-based hand-drawn batik. Few studies have specifically analyzed the strategic mechanisms behind this international recognition, how it is capitalized on by local actors, and how recognition contributes to the transformation of Wukirsari batik's position within the global value chain.

Based on this gap, this article aims to analyze international recognition as a strategy to increase the competitiveness of Wukirsari hand-drawn batik in the global market. This research specifically examines the forms of international recognition obtained, the strategies local actors use to utilize it, and its implications for strengthening the reputation, market access, and economic sustainability of batik communities. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, through document analysis, field observations, and in-depth interviews with artisans, cooperative managers, and relevant stakeholders.

The novelty of this research lies in its analytical perspective, which positions international recognition not as a passive outcome of marketing success, but as a deliberate and integrated competitive strategy within the Wukirsari batik ecosystem. By linking international recognition, community institutions, and global brand communication, this research offers a new approach to understanding the competitiveness of local culture-based creative industries in the global market.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

The analysis presented in this section follows the analytical indicators outlined in the Table 1, allowing for a systematic examination of how international recognition is translated into competitive strategies and sustainability outcomes within Wukirsari batik ecosystem. This study adopts a qualitative case study approach to explore the strategic role of international recognition within a community-based creative industry. A case study design was selected because it enables an in-depth examination of complex social, cultural, and institutional dynamics within a real-life context. This approach is particularly appropriate for investigating heritage-based creative industries, where competitiveness and sustainability are shaped by symbolic value, cultural meaning, and collective practices rather than solely by quantitative indicators. This research uses a qualitative approach with a

case study design that focuses on the ecosystem of hand-drawn batik in Wukirsari Village, Imogiri District, Bantul Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region, with an emphasis on the Giriloyo Batik center. This approach was chosen to deeply understand the strategies and socio-economic dynamics in utilizing international recognition as an effort to increase the competitiveness of local hand-drawn batik in the global market. The case study design allows for contextual analysis of interactions between factors, including artisans, cooperatives, government, and international market partners, which cannot be adequately explained through a quantitative approach [1],[2].

The research was conducted chronologically through problem identification, literature review, case study location determination, and field data collection. Data were collected through multiple qualitative techniques to ensure depth and triangulation. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with key informants, including batik artisans, cooperative leaders, and local stakeholders involved in cultural promotion. These interviews focused on experiences of international engagement, perceptions of recognition, and its perceived impact on competitiveness and sustainability. Secondary data were gathered from institutional documents, exhibition records, media coverage, and policy reports related to the development of creative industries. Data were obtained through direct observation of production activities, quality control, and hand-drawn batik marketing practices, semi-structured interviews with artisans, cooperative managers, and related stakeholders, and document analysis including activity reports, social media archives, export data, and relevant international cooperation documents [3],[4].

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis through data reduction, category grouping, and interpretation of meaning identify the relationship between international recognition, competitiveness enhancement strategies, and the sustainability of the Wukirsari batik business. The main research variables covering international recognition, competitive strategy, and batik business sustainability were operationalized into specific analytical indicators to guide data collection and thematic analysis. These variables, indicators, and corresponding data sources are summarized in Table 1. This operationalization ensured that abstract concepts such as recognition and competitiveness were translated into observable empirical dimensions. This methodological approach ensures analytical rigor while allowing flexibility in capturing the contextual dynamics of community-based creative industries.

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study and provided voluntary consent prior to data collection. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured to protect the identities of informants, particularly in relation to sensitive economic and institutional information. In addition, the researcher maintained reflexive awareness to minimize potential bias during data interpretation, acknowledging positionality in relation to the community studied.

**Table 1.** Research Variables and Analysis Indicators, and Data Source

Number	Variable	Analytical Indicators	Data Sources
1	International recognition	Participation in international exhibition; export cooperation with foreign buyers; foreign media and digital platform coverage; cultural heritage recognition	Interviews with artisans and cooperative managers; observation of exhibitions; document analysis (media reports, export recorder)
2	Competitive strategy	Authenticity-based branding; product differentiation (motifs, material, sizes); quality control and standardization; institutional strengthening	Interviews; observation of production and marketing practices; cooperative documents
3	Sustainability of Batik business	Income stability of artisans; continuity of traditional production; institutional cohesion; long-term market access	Interviews; field observation; secondary data and reports

Data validity is maintained through triangulation of sources and methods by comparing the results of observations, interviews and documents, to ensure consistency of findings and increase the validity of research results so that the conclusions produced can be accepted scientifically. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, involving iterative processes of data reduction, coding, and interpretation. Analytical themes were developed by linking empirical findings with theoretical concepts from creative economy, competitiveness, and cultural sustainability frameworks. To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was applied by cross-checking interview data with documentary sources. In addition, reflexive analysis was employed to minimize researcher bias and strengthen the credibility of the interpretation

### 3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This section presents the research findings and provides a comprehensive discussion on how international recognition functions as a strategic mechanism to enhance the competitiveness of local hand-drawn batik in Wukirsari, with particular emphasis on the Giriloyo batik center. The results are derived from field observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and are interpreted through a qualitative thematic approach. This section presents and analyzes the empirical findings of the study by examining how international recognition is generated, internalized, and strategically leveraged within the Wukirsari batik ecosystem. The analysis is structured around four interrelated dimensions: forms of international recognition, competitive strategy, sustainability and community empowerment, and institutional support for market integration. By integrating empirical evidence with relevant theoretical perspectives, this section highlights the dynamic interaction between global recognition and local institutional capacity.

#### Forms of International Recognition in Wukirsari Batik Ecosystem

The research results demonstrate that international recognition within the Wukirsari hand-drawn batik ecosystem emerges through multiple, mutually reinforcing forms, including participation in international exhibitions, small- and medium-scale export cooperation, coverage by foreign media and digital platforms, as well as symbolic recognition as part of intangible cultural heritage. From a theoretical standpoint, these forms of recognition can be understood as manifestations of symbolic capital that enhance legitimacy and credibility within global cultural and market fields [4], [3].

Participation in international exhibitions and cultural trade events represents a key mechanism through which symbolic capital is accumulated and displayed in transnational arenas. Such participation not only facilitates direct market access but also enables cultural positioning, where Wukirsari batik is framed as an authentic, heritage-based product aligned with the values of the global creative economy [3], [5]. In parallel, export-oriented cooperation although limited in scale functions as a process of institutional validation, signaling compliance with international quality standards and reinforcing trust among global buyers [4].

Recognition mediated through foreign media and digital platforms further amplifies symbolic value by constructing global narratives around craftsmanship, manual production processes, and cultural continuity. These narratives play a central role in culture based creative industries, where value is co-produced through meaning, storytelling, and consumer perception rather than purely through functional attributes [3], [6]. As such, international recognition in Wukirsari operates not merely at the level of market transactions, but also within the cultural domain where identity and heritage are actively negotiated.

At the local level, batik artisans and cooperatives in Giriloyo strategically internalize international recognition by translating symbolic capital into concrete competitive actions, such as authenticity-based branding, product differentiation, and institutional strengthening. This conversion process reflects the theoretical proposition that symbolic capital can be transformed into economic capital when supported by organizational capacity and collective governance structures [3]. The empirical patterns of this transformation linking specific forms of recognition with corresponding competitive strategies and outcomes are systematically summarized in Table 2, which illustrates how international recognition is operationalized into competitiveness-enhancing mechanisms within the Wukirsari batik ecosystem.

**Table 2.** Forms of International Recognition in the Wukirsari Batik Ecosystem

Form of Recognition	Examples / Activities	Theoretical Significance
International Exhibitions	Participation in global craft fairs, cultural expos, and trade shows	Aligns with social recognition theory, showing how visibility in international arenas enhances cultural legitimacy and market positioning
Export Cooperation (SMEs)	Partnerships with foreign buyers, small-scale export deals	Reflects network and resource-based theory, indicating how SMEs leverage international ties for economic and reputational gains
Foreign Media Coverage	Articles in international magazines, blogs, and digital platforms	Supports symbolic capital framework, demonstrating the role of media in constructing global prestige and narrative authority
Intangible Cultural Heritage Recognition	UNESCO or local heritage listings, cultural awards	Links to cultural sustainability theory, emphasizing symbolic validation and identity preservation on a global scale

Overall, these findings support a process-oriented and relational understanding of international recognition, positioning it not as a static label but as a dynamic resource embedded in social, cultural, and institutional contexts. By integrating symbolic capital theory with the creative economy framework, this study advances existing literature by demonstrating how heritage-based cultural products can leverage international recognition to construct sustainable competitive advantage without undermining local identity [3], [5].

These findings suggest that international recognition in the Wukirsari batik ecosystem extends beyond formal acknowledgment and operates as a form of symbolic capital that enhances cultural legitimacy in global markets. Recognition obtained through international exhibitions, media exposure, and cross-order cultural collaborations functions as a cultural signal that validates the authenticity and heritage value of hand-drawn batik. In line with the creative economy framework [3], [5], such recognition contributes to value creation by embedding narratives of tradition, craftsmanship, and locality into batik products, thereby increasing their perceived cultural and economic worth. This process differentiates hand-drawn batik from mass-produced textiles, which often lack historical depth and cultural meaning. As a result, international recognition not only strengthens market perception but also reinforces the positioning of Wukirsari batik as a heritage-based creative product rather than a purely functional commodity. This symbolic dimension is particularly important in global cultural markets, where consumer preferences are increasingly shaped by authenticity, storytelling, and ethical production practices.

### International Recognition as a Competitive Strategy

Further analysis shows that international recognition acts as a leveraging factor in the strategy to increase the competitiveness of Wukirsari hand-drawn batik. This recognition encourages improvements in production quality standards, motif consistency, and the professionalization of batik cooperative institutions. Furthermore, global legitimacy strengthens artisans bargaining position in the value chain, particularly in price negotiations and international distribution collaborations.

However, the study also found structural challenges, such as limited production capacity, reliance in custom orders, and limited digital literacy among artisans. This suggests that international recognition does not automatically guarantee sustainable competitiveness without being accompanied by internal policy support. Table 2 summarizes the relationship between the form of international recognition, the strategies implemented, and their implications for the competitiveness of Wukirsari hand-drawn batik.

**Table 3.** Relationship Between International Recognition, Competitive Strategy, and Competitiveness Impact

No.	Form of International Recognition	Competitive Strategy Applied	Impact on Competitiveness
1	Participation in international exhibitions	Branding based on authenticity and cultural narrative	Increased global visibility and perceived product value
2	Export-oriented cooperation with foreign buyers	Product standardization and quality control	Improved market access and price competitiveness
3	Coverage by international media and platforms	Storytelling and digital-based promotion	Strengthened brand credibility and consumer trust
4	Recognition as cultural heritage product	Differentiation through symbolic and cultural value	Positioning as a high-value niche product
5	International networking and partnerships	Institutional strengthening of cooperatives	Enhanced bargaining power and business sustainability

Overall, the research findings confirm that international recognition serves not only as a symbol of prestige, but also as a contextual and community based competitive strategy. The success of this strategy depends heavily on the ability of local actors to integrate cultural values, marketing innovation, and institutional strengthening to maintain the sustainability of hand-drawn batik in the global market.

From an analytical perspective, these findings indicate that the effectiveness of international recognition as a competitiveness strategy is highly contingent upon internal readiness and institutional coherence within the local batik ecosystem. While international recognition creates strategic opportunities, its long-term impact can only be realized when supported by adaptive governance, capacity-building initiatives, and coordinated collective action among artisans and cooperatives [2], [4]. Without such internal alignment, international recognition risks remaining symbolic rather than transformative. This finding reinforces the creative economy perspective that cultural value must be accompanied by organizational capability and strategic management to generate sustainable competitive advantage [3], [5]. Accordingly, international recognition should be understood as a dynamic and process-based mechanism, rather than a one-time achievement, in sustaining the global competitiveness of Wukirsari hand-drawn batik [6].

From a strategic perspective, these findings indicate that competitiveness in cultural and creative industries cannot be fully explained by conventional efficiency-driven models alone. While Porter's competitive advantage framework emphasizes productivity, cost efficiency, and scale [4], the Wukirsari case demonstrates that

competitive advantage is largely constructed through differentiation grounded in cultural authenticity and symbolic value. International recognition enhances artisans bargaining positions within the value chain by increasing product credibility, strengthening trust among international buyers, and elevating perceived quality. This allows producers to access premium market segments and negotiate more favorable terms of cooperation.

However, the findings also reveal that international recognition does not automatically translate into sustained competitiveness. Its strategic effectiveness is closely linked to internal organizational capacity, including cooperative governance, quality standardization, and collective branding practices. Without these institutional supports, recognition risks remaining symbolic and temporary, rather than being transformed into long-term economic advantage. Therefore, competitiveness in heritage-based creative industries emerges as a dynamic interaction between external recognition and internal institutional readiness.

### **Implications of International Recognition for Sustainability and Community Empowerment**

The findings further reveal that international recognition generates broader implications beyond market competitiveness, particularly in terms of business sustainability and community empowerment in Wukirsari. International exposure encourages the adoption of more consistent production standards, knowledge transfer, and collective learning among batik artisans, which contribute to long term capability building within the community.

Moreover, international recognition strengthens the social and institutional cohesion of local cooperatives by reinforcement enables artisans to respond more adaptively to global market demands while maintaining local identity and traditional production techniques. Consequently, international recognition supports not only economic sustainability but also the preservation of cultural heritage and the resilience of community-based batik enterprises.

These results indicate that international recognition should be understood as a multidimensional resource that integrates economic, social, and cultural dimensions. When embedded within strong local institutions, it creates a virtuous cycle between global market engagement and community-based development, thereby enhancing the long-term sustainability of local hand-drawn batik industries.

These findings offer a distinct contribution to the creative economy discourse by demonstrating that international recognition functions not merely as external validation, but as an internalized strategic asset within community-based cultural industries. Unlike prior studies that primarily frame international recognition as an outcome of competitiveness, this study positions it as a driver that restructures institutional capacity, collective learning, and strategic orientation at the local level [3],[4]. This perspective extends the UNESCO creative economy framework by empirically illustrating how cultural value, when strategically mobilized through international recognition, can be transformed into sustainable competitive advantage without eroding local identity [5]. By situating global market engagement within strong community institutions, the Wukirsari case provides an alternative development pathway that integrates cultural preservation, economic resilience, and inclusive growth in creative industries [6].

Beyond market performance, international recognition contributes to the sustainability of the Wukirsari batik ecosystem by reinforcing collective identity, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and institutional cohesion among artisans. Engagement with international markets encourages the preservation of traditional techniques, as artisans become more aware of the cultural value attached to authenticity and manual production processes. This finding aligns with UNESCO's cultural sustainability framework [5], which emphasizes the integration of economic development with cultural preservation as a key pillar of sustainable creative industries. Furthermore, international recognition strengthens symbolic capital [7], fostering pride and collective commitment within the community, which in turn supports long-term participation in batik production across generations. Rather than eroding local cultural values, global engagement when mediated through strong community institutions can reinforce cultural continuity and social cohesion. In this sense, international recognition functions as a multidimensional resource that simultaneously supports economic resilience, cultural preservation, and community empowerment, highlighting its strategic relevance for the long-term sustainability of heritage-based creative industries.

### **Institutional Support and Market Integration**

The findings further reveal that institutional support plays a critical role in mediating the relationship between international recognition and market integration in the Wukirsari batik industry. While international recognition enhances visibility and symbolic value, its impact on market access and economic outcomes is strongly influenced by the presence of supportive local institutions, particularly cooperatives and community-based organizations. These institutions function as intermediaries that facilitate coordination among artisans, ensure compliance with quality standards, and manage relationships with external stakeholders, including international buyers and cultural organizations. Without such institutional mechanisms, individual artisans often face constraints in meeting market requirements related to consistency, volume, and certification, which limits the practical benefits of international recognition.

Moreover, institutional support enables the translation of symbolic capital into tangible economic and social outcomes. By organizing collective participation in international exhibitions and coordinating branding strategies, cooperatives help reduce entry barriers to global markets and enhance collective bargaining power. This process aligns with the creative economy perspective, which emphasizes the role of institutions in transforming creativity and cultural assets into sustainable economic value [3], [5]. Institutional mediation also contributes to more equitable value distribution within the community, as collective governance structures help prevent the concentration of benefits among a small number of actors.

The integration of local batik producers into international markets further requires alignment between institutional capacity and market-oriented practices. This includes the adoption of standardized quality control systems, transparent pricing mechanisms, and culturally grounded branding narratives that resonate with global consumers. Consistent with competitiveness theories [4], such institutional readiness enhances the ability of community-based enterprises to sustain their market position over time. In this regard, institutional support not only amplifies the impact of international recognition but also strengthens the resilience of the batik ecosystem by balancing global market demands with local cultural values. Consequently, effective institutional frameworks emerge as a key determinant of whether international recognition can be transformed into long-term competitiveness and sustainability for heritage-based creative industries.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that international recognition plays a strategic role in shaping the competitiveness and sustainability of community-based cultural industries, as evidenced by the hand-drawn batik ecosystem in Wukirsari Village. The findings reveal that international recognition extends beyond symbolic acknowledgment and operates as a form of cultural and symbolic capital that enhances legitimacy in global markets. When supported by effective local institutions, such recognition contributes to differentiation-based competitiveness, strengthens market positioning, and facilitates access to premium market segments. This highlights the importance of viewing international recognition not merely as an outcome of creative activity, but as an active resource that can be strategically leveraged to support long-term development in heritage-based creative industries.

Furthermore, the study underscores the interdependence between external recognition and internal institutional capacity in determining sustainable outcomes. International engagement, when mediated through cooperatives and community-based organizations, can reinforce collective identity, support intergenerational knowledge transfer, and promote institutional cohesion without undermining local cultural values. By integrating insights from the creative economy perspective, competitiveness theory, and cultural sustainability frameworks, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how traditional cultural products can navigate global markets while maintaining cultural authenticity. Overall, the findings suggest that the sustainability of community-based creative industries depends on the alignment between global recognition initiatives, culturally grounded branding strategies, and strong institutional governance at the local level. Future research may build upon this study by adopting comparative approaches across different batik-producing regions or other heritage-based creative industries to enhance generalizability. In addition, mixed-methods research incorporating quantitative indicators such as income changes, export volumes, and market diversification could provide a more comprehensive assessment of the economic impact of international recognition. Exploring the perspectives of international buyers and consumers would also offer valuable insights into how cultural value is perceived and negotiated in global markets.

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