

# Alternative Batik - The Potential of Its Outcome and Designing Methods

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**Abstract** —The Malaysian batik industry can be further expanded by exploring new batik-producing methods which completely differ from conventional age-old practices. Nowadays, the society has more access to various forms of batik designs, especially those which are fresh and versatile. Therefore, there is a need for more options in the production of unique local batik designs to meet the needs and preferences of contemporary societies. To identify whether new batik designs will be widely accepted, the methodology of this study has included a textile design practice session along with a survey. Various types of materials and tools have been experimented on to create new batik designs via various techniques, and these have been compared with those of traditional batik. A questionnaire was also distributed to the batik practitioners to obtain their feedback. The results are hoped to be able to facilitate the growth of Malaysian batik in tandem with global trends. These outcomes can also be implemented theoretically and practically in the curricula of art and design courses of higher learning institutions. The establishment of alternative batik-producing methods will provide additional options for batik producers as well.

**Keywords** - Alternative, Batik, Design, Technique

## 1. Introduction

Batik is an art which has been produced from various technique and design from wax. Batik is a process to block the colour to form a design on fabric<sup>1</sup>. The term “Batik” was derived from the Javanese word “tik”, meaning to drip or write points whereas “Ambatik” means to draw, write, paint or drip<sup>2</sup>. The techniques to produce the themes of batik will depend on the time and space<sup>3</sup>. The history of batik begun in the Javanese islands in the 12th century and then it spread to various places within Nusantara, including the Malay Peninsula. The batik began and developed their production especially in the states of Kelantan and Terengganu in the early 20th century<sup>4</sup>. In the past, traditional batik design generally has been produce using block batik techniques, screen batik techniques and canting batik techniques that produces beautiful effects on fabric<sup>5</sup>. Today, batik production is trying to find its own design niche as a way forward that is to be more contemporary, had free styles. Nowadays, contemporary batik products is getting attention in the public eyes because of its expressive design and techniques. According to Nori Abdullah, the chairman of Yayasan Budi Penyayang, the development of new and exciting talents in the batik industry could make their mark in the world of fashion. Malaysian batik has evolved in terms of design and technique since it has adopted current trends and styles. There are two approaches in the production of contemporary batik; designers are experimenting on these using various types of materials and tools.

## 2. Early Batik-Producing Methods in Malaysia

Batik used to be of considerable prominence in Terengganu, Kelantan, and Pattani<sup>7</sup>. This was in light of the royal patronage of the Sultan of Terengganu who, in the 19th century, actively encouraged foreign artisans to settle down there. Tuan Haji Mohamad Cik Su, a Malay entrepreneur who hailed from Pattani, has established the block technique using a block of wood. In the early 20th century, the first technique of batik production was used in Malaysia, and it was known as Batik Kedah. This was also the initial form of batik sarong made in the Malay Peninsula. At that time, the Malays used a wooden block which was stamped with colours to print designs on white cotton fabric. A fine brush was then used to fine-tune the printed edges. The most commonly-used colours were blue, dark purple, and black<sup>8</sup>. Then, from 1920 onwards, the silk-screen process was introduced. Batik screens were produced from a certain quantity of screen frames that depended on the number of colours in the design concerned. As part of the silk screen process, the screen frames were additionally used to print designs of desired colours onto a piece of cloth placed on a screen table.

The cloth was then dried and its colour allowed to stabilise prior to re-washing and -drying. The process was repeated for as many times as the number of colours present in the design. In the 1930s, batik caps (or batik blocks) were prepared from wax and metal. Ten years later, no batik was produced in light of the Japanese Occupation. In the 1950s, batik entrepreneurs started to produce batik tin, which is also known as batik blok, batik terap, and batik cop. They still adopted Javanese batik designs, and these products were named Batik Solo Kelantan, Batik Perkalongan Kelantan, and Batik Lasem Kelantan, all of which were mass-produced in various designs. In the 1960s, batik canting or batik tulis started to be produced commercially in Malaysia. Thirty years on, the production of batik canting was not only limited to Kelantan and Terengganu; other states like Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Melaka, Pahang, and Sabah have also followed suit. Most of the designs were based on flora and geometry. Also, this type of batik was not produced on cotton, but more on silky textiles such as satin and jacquard silk.

### **3. Problem Statment**

Even though the batik making through stamping block, screen, and canting methods are able to produce special and attractive batik designs, it is observed that these kinds of batik were only favoured and worn by certain communities on certain occasions. Contemporary consumers are more open-minded when choosing batik designs since their preferences and desires are always evolving, apart from being universal. They now have easy access to a rapidly-increasing number of types of textile designs, including batik products and fashion apparel, from all over the world. According to an article in Dimensi column of Berita Minggu, titled, 'Women Prefer Batik' written by Rohaniza Idris; Rozman Ibrahim, a boutique owner from Gaya Warisan Collection of Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman stated that; "Usually the young generation prefer abstract motif whereas older generation is more incline towards floral motifs, like the pucuk paku (bamboo shoots)<sup>9</sup>. Base on the article in Variasi column of Harian Metro, titled 'Malaysian Modern Batik', Madam Rodziah, a local batik entrepreneur stated that, "Malaysian batik has its own artistic value like a beautiful painting which reflects the harmony of our pluralistic society in this country. However, batik design needs to be contemporary and refreshing to ensure that they are always on demand and not on the certain season only."<sup>10</sup>. Due to this issues, batik design production needs to have an alternative technique. This approach could give a different style, fresh and unique features yet do not overdo the traditional and conventional batik design in order to cater the demands of different generations. Further, in another article from Berita Minggu, titled "Abstract Batik Drawing Motif" written by Siti Nur Almizan Aripin, from her interview with Wan Rolianawati Wan Abdullah, of Gallery Semasa had mentioned, "The revolution of batik design and the colour was made based on the fashion trend. Most of the batik motifs are simple and minimalist but yet looked exclusive. Apart from the overlapping batik technique used which is not only expensive but exclusive, the most favourable batik designs are the ones that had simple designs. This is because some people are not comfortable with batik clothing that are heavily designed."<sup>11</sup>. Thus, in order to promote consumption of local batik with innovative and sophisticated designs, explorative researches into the design techniques should be encouraged. This in turn will enhance the potential of modern Malaysian batik products.

### **4. Research Objectives**

1. To produce batik via alternative designing methods on different types of fabrics.
2. To conduct a survey on local batik designers and practitioners to obtain feedback regarding the practicality of alternative methods in batik-designing.

### **5. Research Questions**

1. What are the outcomes of alternative batik-designing methods on different types of fabrics?
2. What are the opinions of local batik designers and practitioners regarding the practicality of alternative methods in batik-designing?

### **6. Research Methodology**

The study was conducted using textile practice base method in textile design studio. A few objects have been utilised in an attempt to come up with alternative methods for making various batik designs on selected types of fabrics. This study has also attempted to determine the outcomes of such methods and their differences with traditional or conventional batik designs. Besides, a survey has been conducted in order to obtain feedback from local batik designers and practitioners regarding the practicality of alternative methods in batik-designing. The data was analysed and transcribed using descriptive and basic statistical approaches.

## 7. Results

Overall, both research objectives have been successfully achieved and the research questions answered. Alternative methods in the production of batik designs and techniques on a few types of fabrics were successful. With reference to the feedback from the respondents, most of them agreed that the alternative methods gave simple-looking designs and had no obvious limitations. The instruments were easy to handle while the designs appeared modern, expressive, and spontaneous. These alternative batik effects were easily produced by textured tools that are commonly found outdoors and indoors. Also, these differed from conventional batik production methods which required the usage of specific tools and methods, apart from being more time-consuming and requiring more control and structure.

Table I: Samples Outcomes of Alternative Batik-producing Methods

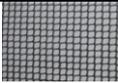
No.	Tools	Fabrics	Samples
1	Sponge Roller	Linen	
2	Chicken Feather	Viscose	
3.	Steel Wool	Cotton Voile	
4.	Rattan Ball	Rayon Jacquard	
5.	Jute Rope	Calico	
6.	Crumpled Paper	Crepe Dubai	
7.	Lace Fabric	Cotton Silk	
8.	Fence Net	Crepe Satin	

Based on Table 2: Respondents' Feedback regarding Potential of Alternative Batik-producing Methods resulted from the responses for the general information on Malaysian batik, all (100%) respondents had good knowledge of the types of batik in the country. In addition, all (100%) respondents knew the commonly-used techniques in the production of local batik as well. Thirty percent of them have heard about alternative methods of producing batik, while 70% have not. This suggested that such methods were new to most of them. Again, all (100%) participants understood the meaning of alternative batik-producing methods, hence showing that they were aware of the existence of ways to produce batik using tools other than the commonly-used ones like canting, blocks, and screens. The findings of the survey were based on the feedback of the Respondents' Observations on Alternative Batik Results. Hence, these alternative methods are likely to be appropriate for commercialisation in Malaysia.

Furthermore, 97% of respondents felt that such methods were suitable for incorporation as a new subject in local institutions of higher learning, while only 3% thought otherwise. In addition, all (100%) respondents agreed that alternative batik-producing methods should be developed and employed in the local batik industry. Subsequently, 97% felt that the products of such methods befitted the identities of Malaysian batik while only 3% disagreed with the same. Finally, with respect to the applications of the aforementioned products, 90% of the participants concurred that these were suitable for use as fashion products and accessories, 80% as craft products, 77% as interior decorative items, and 67% as fine batik artwork. Generally, this study has demonstrated a very positive acceptance of alternative batik-producing methods. Description; this latest enhanced system will control images and data via the vault bank image and will utilise the Neural Engine Chip method along with metadata control. The purpose is to detect whether the ownership copyright and image usage

are more organised.

Table 2: Outcomes of Alternative Batik Designs on Different Fabrics

No	Tools		Alternative Batik Designs and Fabrics
1.	 Lace Fabric	 Sponge Roller	
	 Fence Net	 Chicken Feather	
2.	 Steel Wool	 Jute Rope	
	 Rattan Ball	 Crumpled Paper	

## 8. Conclusion

As a conclusion, the objective of the study was achieved. The results showed that, the alternative methods of batik production have potential to be developed into commercial items such as fashion goods and accessories, interior decorative products, craft, as well as textile artwork. This said methods are also suitable to be introduced as a subject in textile-designing courses of local institutions of higher learning as they differed from conventional batik practices. The local batik industry can also benefit from additional options in terms of methods of batik-making. Besides, these new approaches are capable of retaining the identities of contemporary Malaysian batik products.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank IRMI UiTM, for funding this project under the grant ARAS (600-IRMI/DANA5/3/ARAS(0200/2016). Special thanks to everyone who was involved in this research as the cooperation of the teams has enabled the systematic completion of the same.

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