

Preserving Batik Trusmi's image: Public relations strategies in Cirebon's heritage

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ABSTRACT

Background: Batik, as an Indonesian art form, has not only evolved but also adapted to present needs while maintaining its cultural roots. Moreover, the current surge in batik sales brings both benefits and challenges for artisans. **Purpose:** The study examines public relations strategies aimed at enhancing Batik's image, promoting cultural heritage, and supporting the local economy. **Methods:** This study employed the social constructivism approach to gain insight into the cultural heritage of Trusmi Batik. The research methodology encompassed the use of observation, interviews, and documentation as techniques to thoroughly comprehend the subject matter. **Results:** Trusmi Village, renowned for its distinctive batik art, has transformed into a popular shopping center and tourist hotspot. The batik industry seeks to boost household income and capitalize on its proximity to transportation routes. This expansion has not only generated new employment opportunities but has also inspired ventures beyond the field. Additionally, government support and the role of social media in corporate communications have played crucial roles in contributing to the success of Trusmi. **Conclusion:** The batik industry in Trusmi has brought about a transformation in the region, providing job opportunities and fostering economic prosperity for entrepreneurs and the overall economy. Government investments in branding and the role of social media have played significant roles in contributing to its growth. Additionally, community efforts have resulted in economic benefits, population growth, and advantages in terms of tourism. **Implications:** The growth of the Trusmi Batik industry holds significant implications, highlighting the significance of promoting cultural heritage and storytelling. Furthermore, it contributes to economic progress, social cohesion, and community ties. Government assistance is paramount in ensuring the enduring sustainability and expansion of the sector.

Keywords: Public relations strategy; image; brand; batik trusmi; corporate communication

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INTRODUCTION

Batik is a form of art and cultural heritage that holds significant value in Indonesian history and aesthetics. This unique art, adorned with specific techniques, traditionally embellishes fabric beautifully. Integral to Indonesia's cultural identity, Batik art encompasses 30 different patterns, each holding its own philosophy and meaning. Studying its development, practices, and supporting elements is crucial for understanding the significance and importance of batik in our culture. Batik serves as a cultural guardian, enriching our heritage with beauty and invaluable history (Trixie, 2020).

The intricate and captivating aesthetics of batik have long been integral to the Indonesian culture, reflecting the existence and essence of every region in Indonesia. Alongside its simple coloring technique, batik art is a form of art expression rich in profound meaning. The unique identities of each area, such as Yogyakarta, Pekalongan, Solo, Garut, and Tasikmalaya, can be beautifully expressed through batik art. The batik from these regions is highly renowned and recognized by many people.

Cirebon, a city renowned for its strong batik tradition, particularly stands out for its Trusmi batik. The craftsmanship in this region is exceptional, giving rise to unique and high-quality motifs. In its origin, the classic batik

motifs of Trusmi were imbued with ritual and profound meanings, reserved exclusively for specific events. In addition, while some of these traditional motifs, such as *mega mendung*, *wadasan kencana*, and *sawat panganten*, can still be found today, modern batik artisans rarely produce them due to the complexity of the process. However, as time has passed, batik motifs have undergone modernization to meet diverse market demands. Although classic motifs still exist, Cirebon batik also incorporates various contemporary and appealing designs. This transformation underscores the adaptability of batik art to the evolving needs of the times while still maintaining a deep respect for its cultural roots. In this manner, Trusmi batik in Cirebon has evolved into a living and relevant cultural heritage in the modern era.

The evolution of batik motifs over time is truly a captivating cultural transformation. Batiks hold a unique place as cultural symbols that encapsulate traditional motifs and values, serving as poignant reminders of the cultural and historical heritage that must be preserved. On the flip side, the incorporation of contemporary motifs underscores the adaptability and dynamism of batik art in meeting the demands of the modern era. This transition showcases how batik continues to be a vibrant and evolving cultural art form while maintaining its deep-rooted significance in preserving Indonesia's

rich heritage.

The modernization process serves as motivation for artists and aligns with market expectations. Traditional and modern batik themes contribute to innovation in the industry, but a careful balance must be maintained. This shift highlights the necessity for cultural adaptation while preserving the roots, emphasizing the need to adapt to remain culturally relevant during the transition.

Cirebon features two primary types of batik: the keraton and the coastal Batik (Trusmi). The first type incorporates black, red, and brown colors with distinct designs arranged horizontally on the upper, lower, and middle lines. In contrast, the coastal batik is characterized by brighter tones, utilizing primary colors such as red, green, and blue. Notably, the two-step manufacturing process results in an appealing color combination. Moreover, coastal motifs are inspired by Flora, fauna, and the surrounding environment.

The development of *Megabatik* as an environmentally friendly product by Trusmi Batik Center Area has led to increased sales while simultaneously showing respect for the diverse art and culture of Cirebon.

Understanding the difference between *keraton* and coastal batik will assist you in selecting motifs that align with your preferences and characteristics. Keraton and coastal Batik

differ mainly in color, motifs, and cultural significance. The keraton batik was historically utilized by the *Dalem* and the royal family, giving it a more formal and sophisticated appearance. In contrast, coastal batik is more commonly worn by the public, presenting a casual style. Keraton batik is typically reserved for weddings and religious events, while coastal batik is more suitable for casual and social occasions. Furthermore, the selection of batik type and motif is influenced by the wearer's socio-economic class, personality, and cultural background.

Batik Trusmi has upheld its world-class status in Cirebon over recent decades, transforming the city into a hub of innovative batik art. This has not only preserved its cultural essence but has also inspired contemporary beauty. The success of batik art in Cirebon has significantly bolstered the tourism industry and the local economy, proving the adaptability of cultural art to changing times. With excellent growth potential, batik art in Cirebon creates opportunities for the local creative industries, all while contributing to the preservation of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage with government and public support. Additionally, batik art in Cirebon not only strengthens local identity but also addresses global issues by seamlessly incorporating traditional nuances into modern discourse. Trusmi Batik has

maintained its world-class status in Cirebon over the past decades, positioning the city as a hub of innovative batik art that preserves its culture and inspires modern beauty. The success of batik art in Cirebon has elevated the tourism industry and the local economy, proving the adaptability of cultural art to changing times. With excellent growth potential, batik art in Cirebon offers opportunities for the local creative industries while steadfastly preserving Indonesia's cultural heritage with government and public support. The seamless fusion of traditional element into contemporary dialogue adds to the signifiante of batik art in Cirebon, amplifying its impact on both local and global levels.

The village of Trusmi on the Plered Coast is among the places where the craft of Batik has retained its distinctiveness and continues to thrive today. The entrepreneurial behavior exhibited by Trusmi, characterized by consistency, loyalty, hard work, and creativity, stands out as one of the most critical factors contributing to the success of the business (Pusparani, 2020).

The village not only survived but also flourished, attracting tourists seeking a coastal experience. Trusmi's handicrafts, passed down from generation to generation, drive the local economy and offer employment opportunity, especially for women. The water industry in

Trusmi village supports the local economy and sustains livelihood. Batik production is continuous, emphasizing its crucial role in the local economy. Trusmi Village, boasting 40 retail stores, has become a popular shopping destination for both domestic and foreign tourists. Its success in preserving Batik and transforming into a sought-after shopping hub exemplifies the harmonious coexistence of art and business. It showcases how local communities can adapt to modern life while holding onto their rich cultural heritage. Trusmi has positioned itself as a cultural preservationist, a creative business center, and a must-visit tourist destination (Ibrahim & Indratno, 2022)

Batik in Cirebon boasts a rich cultural heritage and has been an essential aspect of Indonesian culture for centuries. The art of batik craft has been transmitted from generation to generation, with each era adding its unique touch to this traditional craft. In 2009, UNESCO acknowledged Indonesian Batik as a masterpiece of humanity's oral and intangible heritage, recognizing its profound cultural significance and value.

The rise in batik sales within exhibition halls has brought both benefits and challenges to batik makers. While this practice facilitates product purchasing, it diminishes the income of artisans who sell in these halls, resulting in lower payments compared to independent

selling. However, the proliferation of exhibition halls also translates to more job opportunities, especially within batik exhibition halls. Despite the economic impact on artisans, buyers now tend to prefer purchasing from batik exhibition halls rather than directly from artisans. An interview with ER, a public figure, on August 26, 2023, confirmed that the convenience of exhibition halls and the array of batik models available had influenced this shift. Although exhibition halls provide comfort and diversity, artisans require support in adapting to this change. Therefore, governments and industry stakeholders must strive to find a balance that allows artisans to earn a living while ensuring the sustainability of the batik industry (Sumidartini, 2021) can be used for the basic needs of both basic needs and the needs of batik artisans in the business of making batik and batik artisans revenue also used for industrial development or business Trusmi batik. The problems discussed in this research on the impact of batik artisans Trusmi revenue as a result of the development of batik industry Trusmi. With the goal, which is to determine the revenue impact of batik artisans Trusmi batik industry development. The method used in this research is using descriptive qualitative method with the approach used approach SWOT analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat).

Therefore, according to Trihanondo et al.

(2021), an excellent human strategy can play an essential role in promoting the growth of batik, especially the identity of Trusmi in Cirebon, which is significant for the identity of West Java. On the other hand, the expansion of exhibition areas should also be viewed as an opportunity to generate new employment opportunities and boost revenue in the tourism sector, particularly in areas with cultural attractions such as Batik.

However, the challenges posed by the age of globalization and increasing economic competition demand effective strategies to maintain and enhance Trusmi's image. A robust concept can distinguish a product or service, add value, and foster consumer loyalty. In the context of Trusmi's Batik, the image is pivotal for the company's survival and competitiveness in both domestic and international markets.

Considering the significance of image for Trusmi's Batik, the role of a public relations strategy (PR) plays a crucial role in shaping and improving its appearance. As a communications discipline, public relations is instrumental in fostering positive relationships with stakeholders, including consumers, the public, government, and the media. With the right approach, PR can effectively contribute to promoting the image of Trusmi Batik as a highly valued cultural heritage and unique craft.

In the realm of PR, the challenge lies in crafting a message that aligns with the

cultural values and uniqueness of Trusmi Batik. In addition, PR must navigate the digital age and the impact of social media on how consumers perceive information. Therefore, a comprehensive and integrated PR strategy is needed to increase awareness and recognition of Trusmi Batik.

As a quintessential handicraft product from Cirebon, Trusmi Batik significantly contributes to the local economy. The batik industry not only sustains the livelihood of artisans but also bolsters tourism in the region. However, sustainable industrial growth must be coupled with the preservation of cultural and environmental values. In this context, the role of PR is to effectively communicate the sustainability efforts undertaken by artisans and stakeholders in Trusmi.

Several previous studies have delved into the public relations strategies employed by various stakeholders to strengthen the image and identity of Trusmi Batik as an outstanding product and environmentally friendly cultural heritage in West Java. Here are some of these studies: Riyanto and Giovanny provided insights into the diverse product and service innovations undertaken by the Trusmi Group, one of the largest Trusmi batik companies in Cirebon. They demonstrated how the Trusmi Group successfully adapted to evolving markets and consumer needs while empowering artisans

and SMEs to continue batik production during the COVID-19 pandemic (Rachman, 2021).

Tripadvisor presents a variety of reviews from travelers who have visited Batik Trusmi, one of the largest Batik shopping centers in Cirebon. These reviews cover aspects such as the quality of products, services, prices, and facilities offered by Batik Trusmi (Tripadvisor, 2023). In a study by Suryani et al. (2022), the communication strategy in the tourism industry post the COVID-19 pandemic was examined, utilizing the case study of Trusmi Langit Village. The study identified several factors influencing tourists' decision to visit Trusmi Langit Village, one of the tourism education destinations that showcases the process of making Trusmi batik.

As the research highlights, stakeholders employ a multifaceted approach to position Batik Trusmi as a standout product and an eco-friendly cultural heritage in West Java. Their strategies encompass several vital elements. Firstly, they focus on innovating products and services to align with consumer needs and preferences, thereby ensuring the continued relevance of Batik Trusmi in the market. Secondly, they invest in providing facilities and infrastructure that facilitate shopping and tourism activities, enhancing the overall experience for visitors. Thirdly, they actively support artisans and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) within the Batik Trusmi community, offering them

vital resources such as capital, guidance, and training to nurture their growth.

Furthermore, stakeholders prioritize promoting and disseminating Batik Trusmi through diverse media channels, both online and offline, to effectively reach a broader audience. Collaborations with governmental bodies, local communities, media outlets, and academic institutions play a pivotal role in driving the development and preservation of Batik Trusmi. Additionally, a spectrum of events, including exhibitions, competitions, workshops, talk shows, fashion shows, and concerts, is organized to pique public interest and showcase the remarkable quality of Batik Trusmi.

Lastly, there is a strong emphasis on brand development and the protection of environmental rights, reinforcing Batik Trusmi's identity as a sustainable and culturally significant product. These collective efforts underscore the comprehensive strategy that stakeholders employ to elevate the profile of Batik Trusmi and ensure its enduring appeal.

This situation invites deeper exploration while simultaneously addressing the research objectives. These objectives include deciphering how a public relations strategy can effectively uphold the image of Batik Trusmi as a quintessential craft of Cirebon, renowned across Indonesia. It entails delving into the distinct and

high-quality motifs that Batik Trusmi boasts and strategizing their seamless integration into the products. Furthermore, it investigates the role of brand strategy and the impact of information technology and social media in bolstering the PR campaign to promote Batik Trusmi to local and international consumers. This research also probes into the engagement of artisans and local communities, assessing how their involvement can fortify the PR strategy and influence the image and sustainability of Batik Trusmi. Lastly, it evaluates the social and economic ramifications of PR's success on the reputation of Batik Trusmi and its burgeoning popularity within the market.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted in Cirebon in August 2022. Employing a foundation in social constructivism, this research methodology is underpinned by the belief that individuals actively seek knowledge and cultivate a profound understanding of the world and their surroundings. Creswell emphasized the subjective nature of experiences related to objects and events, reinforcing the idea that individuals constructed meaning through their interactions and interpretations (Creswell, 2014).

Researchers carefully evaluated how informants constructed their comprehension

of reality through their unique experiences and viewpoints. Employing this approach aided in formulating a comprehensive strategy for educating the public about the cultural heritage of Batik Trusmi. Silverman (2015) elucidated that conducting a thorough analysis and assessment of the then-current landscape revealed the intricate social dynamics at play. Cultural backgrounds, individual experiences, and historical contexts significantly shaped the societal influence of research subjects. The constructivist perspective posited that reality was fashioned through the creative endeavors of individuals' efforts (Harsanto & Permana, 2021; Huang, 2021; Kusumastuti et al., 2022)

During data collection, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with informants relevant to the study. The interviews were carried out with a variety of individuals, including artisans, shopkeepers, laborers, and government officials, all of whom possessed extensive knowledge of the prevailing circumstances and a deep historical background of Batik. The focus of this study was on the artisans of Trusmi in the Cirebon region. Interviews were conducted with twenty open-ended questions to obtain comprehensive, unrestricted, and detailed responses. The purpose of this investigation was to gain a thorough understanding of the method used to promote the image of Batik as a cultural asset contributing to the local economy, with

a specific focus on the perceived intricacies of Batik.

Conducting observations was critical for assessing the author's research urgency level and validating the necessity of the study's pursuit. This procedure entailed systematically recording observations and applying data analysis tools to validate or refine the gathered data. It ensured that the research remained aligned with its objectives and allowed for any necessary adjustments to the research focus or methodology. Observations provided valuable insights into the phenomenon under investigation, guiding the research in a more informed direction and contributing to the overall rigor of the study.

Documentation was accomplished by capturing photographs directly at the research site and conducting an extensive review of relevant material from various sources to support the underlying idea. The sources used in this study included printed materials such as books and articles from national and international publications.

The data processing methodology of the study included a data analysis strategy (Huberman and Miles, 2014). This strategy encompassed several stages in its execution. The first stage involved data reduction, where the extensive information gathered during field research was distilled into more manageable

subsets. These subsets were presented in various formats, including matrices, graphs, networks, and images. Following data reduction, the next phase entailed presenting the processed data in a graphical format, typically as a linear regression line. This graphical representation allowed for a visual assessment of the relationships within the data. Additionally, during this phase, the compatibility between the two data sets was re-evaluated to ensure the accuracy and validity of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the 14th century, Trusmi emerged as a significant center for Batik production. The origin of Trusmi's name is rooted in resilient plant that continued to thrive despite attempts by the inhabitants to trim it back. Trusmi, with its beautiful and symbolic origin, draws its name from the words "continue to blossom." This period marked the golden age of batik art, characterized by heightened creativity. Trusmi batik exhibits distinctive differences from that of Yogyakarta, Solo, or Pekalongan. Visually, the colors and motifs take on a unique character. With a vibrant color palette featuring shades like vivid red, soft pink, sky blue, and muted green, Trusmi batik radiates brightness. The motifs are more relaxed, portraying the everyday aspects of coastal towns and capturing scenes of residents engaging in routine activities or showcasing the

brehtaking marine life.

Trusmi is a pivotal hub for batik production in West Java, with Cirebon serving as its epicenter. In the Trusmi village of the Plered district, located 5 km from the city center, the unmistakable marker of the "Trusmi Batik Shopping Attraction" stands at the market intersection. This central hub for Trusmi Batik production is situated in Cirebon, West Java, and the village of Trusmi, with its unique name, stands out prominently in the Plered district of Cirebon Regency. Positioned just 5 kilometers from the city center, Trusmi is where Plered Market intersects, proudly declaring itself as a premier destination for batik shopping. The village is divided into two sections: Trusmi Kulon and Trusmi Wetan. The surrounding area of Trusmi is home to several villages renowned for their expertise in Batik and handicrafts, specifically Gameel, Kaliwulu, Wotgali, Kalitengah, and Panembahan. As the batik industry flourishes in Trusmi village, numerous showrooms now exhibit a rich variety of batik products. Additionally, artisans have transformed their residences into exhibition spaces, contributing to the vibrant display of the region's artistic and cultural heritage.

Indeed, there are various methods and types of batik production. The specific type and manufacturing method of Batik play a crucial role in determining both the price and quality

difference, as stated by WD, a batik shop owner (Interview conducted August 21, 2023).

There are various types of Trusmi batik based on the techniques employed by batik artisans in the production process. One such type is *Batik Tulis*, where, although the shape remains consistent, the ornaments display distinct differences. This is achieved through a meticulous, hands-on process involving canting, wax, cloth, and dye, resulting in a final product identical to Isen-isen in terms of shape, appearance, and flexibility. When evaluating the level of difficulty and quality, the higher price of hand-written Batik compared to printed Batik becomes evident. Tightening the isen-isen can result in a lack of distinctness, causing the strokes to merge and appear smoother. In contrast, a rejuvenated stamp or tool with batik patterns is utilized in creating printed products. The subsequent step entails dipping the stamp in hot wax and pressing it onto the fabric (Prasetyo & Disarifianti, 2021; Ratnawati & Ati, 2021)

Twenty-four distinct industries within the batik sector in Trusmi village employ, on average, 5 to 15 workers per industry. The following Table 1 shows the number of batik industries in Trusmi village.

The table illustrates the concentration of the batik industry in RW 02, where the community’s primary focus is on augmenting their household income through this means.

Table 1 The quantity of batik businesses in Trusmi Village

No	Trusmi Village	Batik Industry
1	RW 01	5
2	RW 02	9
3	RW 03	3
4	RW 04	3
5	RW 05	4

Source: Trusmi Wetan Village Profile, 2022

The increased number of workers in RW 02’s batik sector is attributed to an ample supply of residents with excess capital to establish batik factories and a strong desire to work in the field due to their specialized skills. AJ, the head of RW, shared that fewer residents are interested in working in the batik industry, and some prefer to work in the city instead.

The ease of production in the Trusmi batik industry depends on elements such as expertise, resources, financial capabilities, and the types of community activities required to increase earnings. In addition, improving marketing efforts through expanding the actors’ own initiatives can also improve marketing, as explained by one of the batik business owners (Putri et al., 2018) or Trusmi batik artisans do externally:

“I ventured into the batik business because I believe it’s a relatively easy endeavor to manage. There are many benefits, like the availability of skilled labor. Most people around here have a knack for Batik creation. In this Trusmi village, the art of Batik-making has been passed down through generations, so finding workers for the shop is straightforward. Marketing is

less challenging too since customers have the freedom to choose what they desire.”

The growth of the batik industry not only expands job opportunities but also strengthens community bonds and unity. The reasons why the people of Trusmi Village opt to work as craftsmen or employees in the batik industry are diverse. Here are a few reasons they prefer to open a business nearby: 1) low capital requirements, 2) proximity, and 3) cultural heritage are essential factors. From their teenage years, young individuals have been learning batik techniques, perpetuating a hereditary enterprise. Furthermore, numerous community members play integral roles in the batik industry, enabling those who have yet to gain prior experience to contribute as skilled artisans.

Batik craftsmen in Trusmi Village find their substantial earnings satisfactory for meeting their daily needs, with the consistency of receiving income being a crucial factor.

The majority of Batik produced in Trusmi Village is crafted using locally-sourced materials. Trusmi Village is a place where some locals make a living through batik manufacturing. As stated by the Village Secretary of Trusmi Wetan: “Absolutely, our local artisans and business folks have remarkable skills in batik craftsmanship. Thanks to tourism, the batik industry has seen a boost, helping our artisans meet their daily needs. Plus, the various batik industries here create job

opportunities for us locals”. MS (2022, August 21). Personal Interview.

The diverse batik industries of Trusmi Village have gained popularity among both local and foreign visitors. The proximity of Trusmi Village to the Pantura route and the Cipali tollgate facilitates convenient shopping for tourists. Certainly, during the holiday season, many tourists come to Trusmi Village to shop. Not only do batik entrepreneurs benefit, but the surrounding community can also share in the prosperity, such as pedicab drivers, hawkers, parking attendants, and others, as mentioned by the marketing manager at PT Batik Trusmi:

“It just does not feel right if you are in Cirebon during the tourist season and miss out on visiting Batik Trusmi. And not just Trusmi, but other batik shops as well. The lively batik industry opens up opportunities for a variety of individuals - from entrepreneurs to hawkers, pedicab drivers, snack vendors, and souvenir sellers. Trusmi Village has truly transformed into a shopping destination, offering a bustling hub for anyone looking to experience the richness of batik.” FR (2022, August 21). Personal Interview.

“Workers in Trusmi’s batik shops can make ends meet with just a high school diploma, according to one of those workers at the Batik Kelana shop: “*Alhamdulillah*, when I was working as a casual laborer, my income was unpredictable. But since I started working at Batik Kelana, I have found that having just a high school diploma is enough to make ends meet. The downside is that it limits job options to retail roles. However, I am content with my current circumstances because my earnings enable me to fulfill my daily needs without financial burden.” RW (2022, August 21). Personal Interview.

Trusmi Village has garnered significant attention from both domestic and international tourists, owing to its thriving batik industries. Tourists are warmly welcomed near the Pantura route and Cipali tollgate in Trusmi Village for immersive shopping experiences. During the holiday season, a considerable influx of tourists visits Trusmi Village, contributing not only to the prosperity of batik entrepreneurs but also benefitting the surrounding community. This positive impact extends to various sectors, such as pedicab drivers, hawkers, parking attendants, and others, as explained by the marketing manager at PT Batik Trusmi:

“There is a noticeable shift between then and now. In the past, batik stores were less hectic, but the surroundings were far from silent. The landscape was filled with rice fields and gardens, and most people earned their livelihood through manual labor, farming, or gardening. When you look at Trusmi’s bustling road today, it might seem chaotic, hiding the numerous houses and batik shops. Yet, the locals are appreciative of the busy batik shops, recognizing their significant role in bolstering the economic fortunes of many in the batik industry – be it entrepreneurs, artisans, employees, and others.” AJ (2022, August 21). Personal Interview.

There are definitely rewards for batik business owners, but they must exert considerable effort to sustain their enterprise have to work hard to keep their businesses in Trusmi Village, as articulated by the owner of Batik Elsa:

“Over the past seven years, I have dedicated myself to running this batik venture. I started with a makeshift shop and gradually expanded from there. Initially, I had just two employees and four skilled artisans on my team. Grateful (*Alhamdulillah*) for the progress my batik shop has made; it can now stand shoulder to shoulder with other shops in the area, allowing us to generate sufficient funds for further expansion. In the midst of challenging market conditions, it becomes crucial to focus on the quality of Batik, regularly introduce new patterns, and consistently provide an outstanding customer experience, with a special emphasis on kindness. This commitment has been pivotal to the success and sustainability of my venture” WD (2022, August 21). Personal Interview.

Since its inception in the 1970s, Trusmi Village’s batik industry has prospered. Initially, the landscape of Trusmi Village was predominantly characterized by agricultural land and plantations. The subsequent growth in the region has not only contributed to the prosperity of the batik industry but has also inspired the local population to explore unconventional business endeavors beyond traditional agriculture and plantations.

The establishment of the batik industry in Trusmi Village has resulted in a multicultural population, attracting job seekers from nearby cities and regions to the area. The distinctive cultural characteristics of community members play a crucial role in shaping the local community.

Through the adoption of modern

technology, the local government is dedicated to boosting industrial output and expanding manufacturing processes. In light of this, the community must develop the ability to keep up with contemporary trends and systems. The emergence of industrial areas within the region does not necessarily preclude the potential for alterations in various aspects of existence, encompassing environmental transformations and ethical revisions. The expansion of the industry offers job opportunities for both the local population and those from outside the area, resulting in population migration (Rahman & Sjoraida, 2017).

According to Hanny et al. (Hafiar et al., 2019), the batik industry in Trusmi Village positively impacts the local economy, benefiting both residents and individuals from outside the area involved in the industry. On top of that, the expansion of the batik industry in Trusmi Village not only positively affects batik business owners but also has ripple effect on nearby merchants, such as street vendors, supermarkets, gift shops, and pedicab operators, as the area transforms into a shopping hotspot in the Cirebon region. During the holiday season, there is an increase in visitors to Trusmi Village, drawn by the allure of batik and Cirebon souvenirs. The author delves into a study on the role played by the Trusmi Batik Home Industry in enhancing the regional economy in Trusmi Village, building

on this background. Moreover, the author seeks to understand the extent of the batik industry's economic influence on the community. In Cirebon, one village stands out for its thriving batik industry, where many residents make their livelihoods.

Community members express optimism that the government will implement policies to propel the batik industry forward, thereby averting undesirable outcomes. As detailed by RD (30), an employee of Batik Salma, the community stands to benefit significantly from the existence of this industry.

“My father is hopeful that the government will focus on the Trusmi area to attract more visitors. I am wondering how the government can actively promote Trusmi batik to enhance its popularity and bring in more income for the people here” RD (2022, August 21). Personal Interview.

According to the author's findings, the daily progress in batik industry activities has led to the current situation, ultimately improving the lives of individuals. As expressed by a shop worker:

“This batik business brings me happiness, and it helps me earn more money to meet my needs. As a part-time worker, my income is sometimes stable, but when I work as a full-time employee, I can make almost a million dollars monthly. I am really thankful for that monthly pay because it gives me financial stability.” RW (2022, August 21). Personal Interview.

By leveraging strategic communication, public relations aims to improve the

organization's image and bolster collaboration with the public. As the boundaries between these fields blur, the role of public relations is expanding within organizations. Amidst the evolving business landscape, the integration of communication efforts has emerged to counteract the "loss of value to shareholders" and declining levels of customer loyalty toward organizations. The economic crisis has spurred a convergence of public relations communications, mainly driven by corporate belt-tightening. According to Bush, American Airlines recognizes the potential of PR to enhance advertising impact despite economic challenges and limited budgets (Bush, 2009).

Propelled by consumer interest, social media is undergoing rapid expansion. The surge of social media and the increasing awareness among consumers are the primary catalysts behind the integration of marketing and public relations activities at American Airlines (Bush, 2009). As noted by Jang et al. (2016), clients now expect integrated programs and consistent brand messaging across every customer interaction.

Trusmi, once merely a village name, has evolved into a recognized brand or trademark in Cirebon. Initial resistance from the community primarily stemmed from the emergence of a competitor, "Batik Trusmi." However, the branding was well-received, and despite initial

reservations, the brand continued to thrive. This Trusmi area has undergone a transformation into a prominent shopping and tourism hub, largely owing to the presence of this brand. Recognizing its significance as a primary source of income for the majority of the local population, the government prioritizes the Trusmi batik industry.

As a trademark, Trusmi has gained nationwide recognition. Unlike a superficial visual identity and catchy tagline, Trusmi's brand embodies the organization's underlying principles, purpose, and long-term goals. As suggested by Kotas et al. (2018), a brand functions as a distinct identifier, setting products apart from competitors. Trusmi's brand extends beyond its offerings to include its reputation, culture, and underlying values. The Trusmi brand is an experience that transcends mere marketing. According to Bulatovic et al. (2016) and Jafari et al. (2016), branding serves as a comprehensive messaging platform for companies to showcase their operations and accomplish their goals.

Trusmi Village's commitment to quality and service is evident in its renowned brand. The functions of the brand cover a wide spectrum, encompass brand creation, awareness, quality assurance, quantity management, satisfaction guarantees, and promotional support. Albuquerque & Costa (2020) and Sammut-

Bonnici (2015) highlight the close connection between branding and marketing strategy, underscoring the need for deliberate planning and execution of various methods to accomplish personal and organizational goals.

Batik business owners, including those in Trusmi Village, offer both online assistance and field services. This particular location has sparked a revolutionary shift in business communication. The core of this perspective is the recognition that marketing communication has evolved into a collaborative effort. Social media plays a pivotal role in facilitating this form of communication. As the internet and social media platforms continue to expand, there are increased chances for engaging with the public. However, it also implies that organizations must vigilantly monitor their digital image (Fauziah, 2020; Fitria, 2017; Krishnamoorthy & Vigram, 2021).

The yearly advancement of the batik industry in Trusmi Village is evident to a village official who experiences its growing activity firsthand. The Trusmi district draws in numerous tourists seeking shopping opportunities. Trusmi village is a favored destination for artists and officials seeking to indulge in shopping. A village official highlighted the contrast, stating that entrepreneurs are more fervently engaged in competing with their counterparts.

“Alhamdulillah, as the village secretary, I witness changes annually. The batik

business has flourished, and it is now thriving. The impact is not only felt by batik entrepreneurs but also by the local residents, such as pedicab drivers. Many tourists seek their services, and local merchants share in the prosperity. I also observe the enthusiasm of excited of the batik shop owners and the villagers, who are determined to revive the batik industry and make it a symbol of this village and an integral part of Cirebon’s cultural heritage. This batik business will continue to be the primary means of livelihood for many, adapting to the changing times.” MS (2022, August 21). Personal Interview.

Social media equally facilitates increased social awareness among consumers. The findings of Baker et al. (2015) illustrate a broader pattern where brands are now expected to transcend their intrinsic limits. The role of organizational public relations is evolving with the changing times. According to Dottori (2018), Sidiq & Harahap (2019), and Tam et al. (2022), public relations involves more than just promoting business products; it also involves shaping strategic messaging.

Following a comprehensive analysis of Trusmi Village’s objective conditions and resident interviews, we discover that various industries in the area provide a diverse range of employment opportunities, including roles for artisans, batik shop employees, and others within the batik sector. Trusmi Village has undergone a positive transformation attributed to the expansion of batik shops, significantly benefitting local traders and pedicab drivers.

This, in turn, has contributed to the overall improvement of the economy and the quality of life in the area.

By commissioning the people of Trusmi and Kaliwulu to replicate the Sultan's Batik, a novel art form emerged: Trusmi Batik. Under the Sultan's guidance, the two communities endeavored to create an identical Batik. While developing Batik, the Trusmi community also demonstrated skill in crafting wood. Subsequently, the tribes presented their Batik to the Sultan. The Sultan's inability to distinguish between the two Batiks mirrored the original's uniqueness. Adhering to the Sultan's directive, Trusmi artisans meticulously fashioned an identical Batik, a tradition now carried on by their descendants.

Branding possesses a narrative component, as demonstrated in this tale. The significance of authentic business principles and methods in achieving company success has grown significantly. In line with Abdul Ghani (2020) and Portal's (2019) findings, public relations should prioritize authenticity to strengthen the brand. Thier (2018) notes a correlation between genuineness and storytelling. A story is necessary for almost every aspect of an organization, as research has shown that branding heavily relies on narratives. The long history of advertising work contributes to its current success. Schwabe et al. (2019)

found that stories are gaining importance in organizational public relations and marketing strategies. Stories are increasingly recognized as central in branding and have been dubbed the "hidden heroes of effective branding campaigns in any sector" (Hay et al., 2022).

As a result, the implementation of this PR strategy generated employment, reduced unemployment in the nearby community, and turned the village into a popular shopping and tourist destination in Cirebon. In resonance with the brand's authenticity, numerous parties have become PR representatives for Trusmi's Cirebon batik (Table 2).

The PR table outlines various methods for maintaining the reputation of Batik Trusmi as the emblematic craft of Cirebon. First and foremost, disseminating information and promoting cultural events through media platforms will help increase the public's knowledge of the cultural significance and inherent excellence of batik products. Additionally, the involvement of local community members and the active participation of experienced artisans will not only strengthen community ties but also preserve traditional knowledge and skills. Moreover, environmental campaigns serve as a manifestation of commitment to the adoption and implementation of environmentally sustainable activities. Furthermore, engaging tourists through farm tours and workshops

Table 2 Batik Business PR Strategy in Trusmi Village

No	PR Strategy	
1	Increased Public Awareness	Leveraging mass media, social networks, and cultural events to increase public understanding of the cultural values and unique qualities of Batik Trusmi.
2	Collaboration with local communities	Collaborating with local groups and cultural institutions to organize events, exhibitions, and workshops that promote the cultural heritage of Batik and strengthen ties with local communities.
3	Craftsman involvement	Fostering close relationships with artisans through training, technical guidance, and financial support to enhance product quality and preserve traditional expertise
4	Environment Campaign	Emphasizing the utilization of natural and environmentally friendly ingredients in batik production and actively participating in environmental hygiene campaigns to cultivate an image that is responsible and environmentally conscious.
5	Increasing Tourist Engagement	Organize factory tours, workshops, and live demonstrations of Batik crafting for visitors to provide an interactive experience and enhance the appeal for tourists.

Source: Research Processed Results, 2022

provides a distinctive and unique experiential opportunity. In addition, involving media and celebrity entertainers promotes public awareness. Simultaneously, online marketing enables Batik Trusmi to effectively penetrate international markets while communicating the story associated with each product. In conclusion, implementing this comprehensive public relations effort has the potential to secure Batik Trusmi's reputation as a significant and widely recognized cultural asset.

CONCLUSION

The research findings yield the following

conclusions: Firstly, the transformation of Trusmi Village, propelled by the growth of small and medium-sized industries centered around Batik production, has resulted in the organic expansion of Trusmi's Batik branding. Furthermore, recognizing the significance of their shared goals, the local community and the Batik industry have collaborated extensively on their public relations initiatives. Notably, Trusmi Batik's distinct branding strategy, deeply rooted in its historical heritage, distinguishes it from other Batik brands. In this context, public relations play a pivotal role in crafting a compelling narrative that revolves around the authenticity and cultural significance of Trusmi

Batik.

The impact of this PR-driven branding strategy has been substantial, particularly in the lives of the local community members. Many individuals have transitioned from traditional farming roles to becoming entrepreneurs within the Batik industry. This shift is primarily due to the unpredictability of income from agriculture and the diminishing availability of arable land. What was once a dependable source of livelihood was no longer sufficient to meet their daily needs. Consequently, the success of the Batik industry, fueled by effective PR strategies, has not only elevated the image of Trusmi Batik but has also brought about significant economic changes in the lives of the community members.

On the other hand, as the batik industry has become more successful, it has also brought about changes to the community's social fabric. The sense of unity among community members and the strength of their social relationships have suffered due to recent events. The expansion of the batik industry has resulted in several unintended consequences, in addition to the apparent positive effects on the economy, such as higher revenue levels and more business opportunities.

The effects of Batik production are tangible in the lives of those within the impacted community. With the Trusmi Batik home industry serving as their primary source

of employment, farmers and casual laborers have been able to transition to new professions within the small-scale Batik industry. This versatility has enabled Trusmi Batik employees to hold multiple positions and contribute to the industry's growth.

In addition, as the demand for Batik continues to increase, various individuals and organizations have reaped the benefits of the subsequent growth in the sector and the surrounding area's economy. Despite the substantial number of modestly sized batik shops in Trusmi Village, the overall contribution of these enterprises to the local economy remains positive.

Trusmi Batik's success story is a testament to the power of collaboration between the local community and the Batik industry, supported by strategic PR initiatives. Additionally, the unique branding strategy, deeply rooted in the history and authenticity of Trusmi Batik, has positioned it as a cultural treasure. Despite challenges associated with the industry's growth, the positive economic and social impacts outweigh the negatives. Moreover, this research underscores the transformative role that public relations can play in elevating the image and economic viability of traditional crafts and cultural heritage in a changing economic landscape. In essence, Trusmi Batik serves a shining example of how effective PR

can drive economic and social change within a community.

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