

Study of Factors Inhibiting the Business of Batik and Ulos Craftsmen in North Sumatra

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Abstract: North Sumatra is one of the provinces in Indonesia that is rich in ethnic and cultural diversity. One of them is cloth ulos and batik cloth typical of North Sumatra ethnic. However, the business of batik cloth and ulos is not well developed and has not been able to master the national market. This research is descriptive qualitative. The purpose of this research is to identify the inhibiting factors of ulos and batik business, by looking at the craftsmen opinion, and mapping the priority problem faced by the craftsmen. The respondents consisted of 30 batik and 20 ulos craftsmen. From the results of interviews and FGDs, there are different problems faced by craftsmen, namely: a) Batik craftsmen the main problems are on equipment, (40%), then labor (26%), followed by finance and marketing (16%). b) In the ulos craftsmen the priority issues are product marketing (35%), finance (30%), then equipment (20%), the last is labor (15%).

Keywords: Descriptive qualitative, Inhibiting Factors

1. Introduction

From a worldwide perspective, it has been recognized that Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) play a vital role in economic development, as they have been the primary source of job/employment creation and output growth, not only in developing but also in developed countries as in (Abdul *et al.*, 2013). Reference (Golibjon, 2016) shows small and medium enterprises (SMEs) form the bulk of businesses throughout Asia and are often referred to as the thrust of the new economy in these countries, including Indonesia. The Indonesian economy is basically characterized by grass root SMEs that make up nearly 99.95% of the total number of enterprises. As in (Tambunan, 2008, 2011) In Indonesia, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have historically been the main player in domestic economic activities, as they provide a large number of employment and hence generating primary or secondary source of income for many rural poor households. As in (Iqbal and Rahman, 2015) SMEs in Indonesia is a business units that have assets worth more than 50 million Indonesian Rupiah (US\$ 4,760) and up to 10 billion Indonesian Rupiah (US\$ 952,333) are considered as SMEs. In addition to this, another condition must also be checked upon, i.e., sales/year (turnover per year). For a business unit to be qualified as SME in Indonesia, the second condition must also be met. Under it, the sales per year must be more than 300 million Indonesian Rupiah (US\$ 28,570) with an upper limit of 50 billion Indonesian Rupiah (US\$ 4,761,667).

North Sumatra is one of the provinces in Indonesia that is rich in ethnic and cultural diversity. One of them is ulos and batik of North Sumatra. Ulos cloth itself became the identity of Indonesia since it was established on 17 October as National Ulos Day. So also

with the batik of North Sumatra, with the motive of five ethnic Batak (Mandailing, Toba, Simalungun, Karo, Pak - Pak Dairi, and Tapanuli Tengah), and ethnic Malay. Batik North Sumatra has a distinctive style that is different from Javanese batik dominated by flowers and animals, which is to highlight the ethnic nuances of each tribe.

2. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to explain the dominant inhibiting factors in business activities based on the perception of the craftsmen as respondents.

Table 1. Business Inhibiting Factors Based on Respondents' Perceptions

Business Inhibiting Factors	Batik Craftsmen	Ulos Craftsmen
Marketing	17 %	35%
Labor	27 %	15 %
Finance	16 %	30 %
Equipment	40 %	20%
Total	100 %	100 %

Source: primary data processed, 2018

Respondents in this study consisted of batik craftsmen and Ulos in Medan. The number of respondents was fifty people consisting of 30 batik craftsmen and 20 ulos craftsmen. The technique of collecting samples was purposive sampling with the following criteria: 1) Craftsmen have been in business for at least two years, 2) The age of the craftsmen is at least 25 years.

This type of research is a qualitative descriptive study, data collection techniques using interviews and open questionnaires, besides that researchers also conducted FGDs with the Medan City Department of Industry and Trade to gain insight into the government's role in the progress of batik and ulos craftsmen.

3. Result And Discussion

The craftsmen of Ulos and batik in North Sumatera have received support from the government and the private sector, but not all them in the region get the help well, because the government has limitations in providing assistance to 33 cities and districts in North Sumatera that require attention in the development small and medium business. Research on the craftsmen especially batik and Ulos done to find the obstacles that still faced by these craftsmen. Based on observations and interviews, there are differences in the priority of problems faced by batik artisans and Ulos Sumatera Utara. The differences can be seen in the graph as follows.

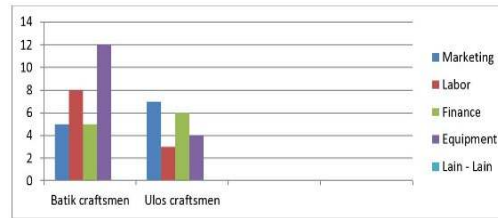


Fig. 1. Factor Inhibiting Growth of Batik Business and Ulos
Source: primary data processed, 2018

Based on interviews and observations, batik craftsmen complained about the availability of equipment in the batik production process, while the ulos craftsmen in the labor and financial constraints became their own priorities. The explanation of such constraints is on the following matters

3.1 Ulos Craftsmen

3.1.1 Marketing

The problem of marketing ulos cloth is limited use of Batak tribes such as customary weddings, mourning ceremonies, and so on. So the use of the limited causes Ulos become exclusive products and affect the marketing the problem of selling price of ulos cloth is that not all types of ulos can be solved with sophisticated tools, traditional tools require a long time, traditional tools called Gedogan require precision and long time to weave wool and silk cloth into ulos and are ready to use manually. Another cause is the skill required to produce Ulos make Ulos price is quite expensive in the market. The lack of use of ulos, production is carried out continuously, but limited markets make it difficult to develop ulos crafts. So the role of the Government is very important to enhance the insight of the region of Tourism, by increasing the role of regional tourism, traditional clothing is widely used and customary kelestarian can be maintained especially in North Sumatra.

3.1.2 Finance

Common constraints in finance are related to marketing constraints, namely the lack of demand for ulos fabrics. So Ulos ready takes a long time in sales, will lead a new production disruption Ulos with little demand. The slow turnover is the financial problems of the craftsmen.

3.1.3 Equipment

Ulos craftsmen still use manual techniques in the production process. The looms used are traditional looms and non-machine looms. Many craftsmen use manual looms which the process of completing ulos can reach one month. In the opinion of craftsmen, Non-Machine Looms (ATBM) helps the process of finishing ulos faster manually, but prices are relatively expensive so not all craftsmen have ATBM. While the materials needed to make ulos fabrics such as cotton, wool fabrics, silk fabrics, coloring materials, bark, etc. are still easy to obtain, although some depend on supply in Java.

3.1.4 Labor

Not everyone can make ulos, ulos work requires certain skills in the manufacturing process, and also requires patience and thoroughness, considering the complexity of manual ulos weaving, most ulos craftsmen gain expertise from generation to generation in the family. In general, the complaints of craftsmen is the lack of interest of young people in pursuing the skills of making ulos so that the craftsmen find it difficult to get an energetic workforce.

3.2 North Sumatra Batik Craftsmen

3.2.1 Marketing

The marketing of batik cloth in North Sumatra is still limited to the region of North Sumatra, batik products still do not master the national market. Although the craftsmen acknowledged that most of the products of North Sumatra batik came from orders from government and private institutions in Medan and the surrounding areas were quite high, but due to lack of promotion, the potential of unique North Sumatra batik was not yet popular nationally. The lack of popularity of North Sumatra batik cloth is caused also because Javanese batik is more popular nationally.

3.2.2 Equipment

North Sumatra batik fabric craftsmen face constraints in production equipment, this is due to the raw material for making batik produced from Java, such as canting written and canting batik caps, craftsmen must order from suppliers in Java, precisely Solo. While other tools such as white cotton cloth, pencil patterns, coloring materials and stoves can be obtained from Medan. North Sumatra should be able to create the creativity of a canting device that fits the North Sumatra motif, so that the SUMUT region has a characteristic in the case of ulos patterned batik. From the results of the study, researchers did not find an answer why equipment such as canting and so on could not be produced in North Sumatra.

3.2.3 Labor

Skilled workforce is an obstacle when craftsmen receive many requests for batik. There are not many young people who pursue batik crafts typical of North Sumatra, although economic opportunities are quite good. Many craftsmen suggest that they need institutions that routinely foster unemployed workers to introduce batik production and help develop businesses.

4. Conclusion

Marketing is the dominant inhibitor of Ulos craftsmen, then weaving skill factors that are hereditary, slow velocity of money and capital. Marketing is also a dominant obstacle to batik craftsmen, then equipment factors that are only obtained from Java, and lack of innovation in making batik with distinctive characteristics of ulos. Craftsmen need more intensive government and private roles for the development of regional culture in North Sumatra, especially for Ulos craftsmen and batik. Craftsmen need partnerships to improve the ability of craftsmen, who are from the private sector, the community and the Government.

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