

GREEN REATILING OF CIWARINGIN BATIK COOPERATIVE: CHALLENGES IN MARKETING EXCLUSIVE PRODUCTS BASED ON NATURAL DYES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the green retail strategy implemented by the Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative in marketing exclusive products based on natural dyes. Ciwaringin's written batik industry faces a challenge that is not simple: its products excel in terms of environmental and aesthetic value, but the market reached is limited due to narrow consumer segmentation, lack of digital marketing infrastructure, and non-optimal use of collective promotion platforms. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with primary data obtained through in-depth interviews with the management of the Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative. The findings of the study show that the competitive advantage of Ciwaringin batik products lies in the use of natural dyes that are environmentally friendly, which is in line with the global trend of green marketing. However, promotional efforts are still conventional and rely on deposit-sell mechanisms, without adequate digital platform support. Exclusive market segmentation, namely the upper middle class who really like batik, is a strength as well as a limitation in market expansion. This study recommends strengthening the sustainability narrative, using social media strategically, and the need for government support in developing digital marketing infrastructure for the batik industry based on natural dyes.

INTRODUCTION

Global consumer awareness of environmental issues has driven a significant transformation in the contemporary retail industry landscape. This phenomenon triggered the birth of the concept of green retailing, where business actors not only focus on profitability, but also minimize the negative impact of their operations on the ecosystem (Tirta Mulyadi et al., 2025). The textile industry and textile products, especially traditional crafts such as batik, is one of the most highlighted sectors due to the potential for chemical waste generated from the synthetic dyeing process. Lolo & Pambudi (2020) confirmed that the liquid waste of the textile industry has great potential to pollute the waters if not managed with a standardized green technology approach.

In the midst of this industrialization flow, the Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative emerged as one of the pioneers in the repositioning of the green batik industry through a commitment to use 100% natural dyes based on local wisdom. Alamsyah (2018) explained that before the development of synthetic technology, batik dyeing always used natural materials from plants available in the archipelago, so returning to natural dyes is an effort to preserve cultural heritage while answering today's ecological demands.

This environment-based differentiation puts Ciwaringin Batik in a unique but challenging market position. Products made from natural dyes require a longer production process and special expertise as described by Setiyanto & Fuad (2024) in a study of the production process of natural dye batik. Consequently, these products have mutated into exclusive commodities that target specific consumer groups (niche markets). Conventional marketing strategies are no longer relevant to accommodate the characteristics of green products that require intrinsic value education and storytelling to consumers (Maulidia & Putri, 2023).

On the other hand, cooperative institutions in Indonesia in general still face structural challenges in terms of digitalization and marketing management professionalism. While the modern market demands information openness and interactivity through digital platforms, many artisan cooperatives are still stuck in passive marketing methods and reliance on seasonal momentum (Mandala et al., 2023). Therefore, this study aims to dissect in depth how the Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative articulates a green retailing strategy, faces resistance to technology adoption, and manages a partnership network in the midst of limited capital and marketing infrastructure.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design with a case study approach on the Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews with

cooperative management, field observations of the production process, and documentation of cooperative achievement tracks. Data analysis is carried out interactively, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The validity of the data was tested through source triangulation techniques and triangulation methods to ensure the authenticity of the findings in the field.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Based on an in-depth interview conducted with the management of the Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative, a fairly comprehensive picture was obtained of the real condition of the current marketing strategy. Field findings show that there is a tension between the potential of a product that is actually of high value and the promotional capacity that is still far from adequate. Maula (2021) identified that the Ciwaringin written batik industry faces marketing problems that are structural, not only technical, involving limited knowledge, capital, and ecosystem support that have not fully sided with the craftsmen. To comprehensively understand the complexity of this challenge, the findings of this study are outlined into the following five subjects.

Differentiation Strategy and Validation of Green Product Excellence

Based on the results of the interview, the Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative applied a very strong product differentiation strategy in the aspect of supporting raw materials, namely the use of natural dyes. In the midst of the rampant homogeneity of batik motifs in the traditional market, this cooperative consciously chooses not to compete on quantity or visual similarity, but on the ecological advantages of the product. This is in line with the informant's statement:

"The strategy may be in its natural dyes. We can use the same color as the color, but we can use the same color as the color of the color."

Theoretically, green competitive advantage can be achieved when a business entity is able to create uniqueness that is difficult for competitors to replicate (Wicaksono et al., 2023). Siregar et al. (2020) in a study on the development of the Indonesian batik industry emphasized that increasing the use of natural dyes is one of the key strategies recommended nationally to strengthen the competitiveness of local batik while answering the issue of waste management. The consistency of using natural dyes also strengthens the bargaining position of products amid the onslaught of factory-made batik motif fabrics (Jayanti Mandasari et al., 2019).

This effort to highlight the ecological aspect has not only become an internal marketing jargon, but has received prestigious external recognition. Validation of the quality and authenticity of the process of reaping significant results in 2019, where the cooperative won 2nd place in the Marine Biota Batik Competition held at Taman Mini Indonesia Indah (TMII). Quality recognition through formal awards at the national level is one of the important instruments to validate green brand equity in the eyes of consumers (Maulidia & Putri, 2023).

Maulidia & Putri (2023) further confirmed that a strong brand image based on green credentials is able to significantly encourage consumer purchase decisions without requiring large advertising spending.

Exclusive Market Segmentation, Passive Partnerships, and Seasonal Fluctuations

The complicated and time-consuming nature of natural dye batik production automatically forms a very exclusive market segmentation. The findings of the study show that Ciwaringin Batik consumers are a specific group that has two main criteria simultaneously: having high purchasing power (middle to upper class) and having aesthetic literacy and a deep love for batik culture. The informant confirms the sociological reality of this market:

"... It's not arrogant, but it's actually Ciwari batik is middle class. So he is a batik lover and he also has money. He loves batik but has no money. So he has money but he loves batik so he doesn't like it."

This approach is particularly relevant to the concept of niche market marketing, where marketers focus on sub-segments of the market that have specific characteristics and are not price-sensitive because they prioritize moral values and social status (Lia et al., 2025). Salam & Sukiman (2021) confirm that consumers who have high brand awareness of environmentally friendly products tend to have more stable loyalty and are not easily switched even though the price is higher.

However, this very specific nature of the market has an impact on the partnership pattern that runs passively using the conventional consignment system, which is simply leaving goods at cooperative outlets and handing over independent digital marketing to third parties or resellers. As a result, sales turnover is highly dependent on seasonal demand, especially in August (Independence Day momentum) where there is a surge in demand from government agencies. This dependence on one bureaucratic niche shows that green retail in this cooperative has not been managed with modern marketing management. Fahmi dan Fauzi (2025) emphasized that the synergy between product quality and marketing innovation is the key to the sustainability of sales performance in culture-based handicraft MSMEs.

Barriers to Digital Adoption: Financial Factors and Expectations of Public Intervention

Although digital storytelling is recognized as being able to double the selling value of environmentally friendly products widely, the Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative experiences serious obstacles in technology adoption. The cooperative does not yet have an official website and its digital activities are limited to sporadic uploads of product photos on basic social media platforms without a structured green narrative. The main factor in the rejection of this paid digital investment is the perception of high operational costs. This is reflected in the statement:

"... You see, if you use a platform like that, you have to pay. Like subscriptions, we seem to love them. Not necessarily... Unless the government helps, it seems that we also want to."

In fact, Rahmijati et al. (2020) in a study of batik digital marketing in Semarang City showed that consistent digital promotion is able to significantly strengthen batik marketing management and expand market reach without large costs if done in a planned manner. Azmi Fadhillah & Pratiwi (2021) also confirmed that the proper implementation of digital marketing is able to increase sales of MSME products measurably even though it is done with limited resources.

This skepticism about digital cost efficiency is widely encountered in micro business actors who tend to prioritize physical capital over cyber assets (Veranita et al., 2022). This condition confirms the existence of a high dependency trap on government intervention, where cooperatives feel that the provision of digital marketing infrastructure is a moral obligation of the relevant agencies (Mandala et al. 2023). (Bahtiar et al. 2025) warn that cooperatives and MSMEs that do not immediately transform digitally will lose significant revenue growth opportunities, especially in the increasingly digital post-pandemic era.

Widiati & Ratnasari (2023) in a study on business Instagram optimization for MSMEs emphasized that social media actually does not require large costs to be managed effectively, but requires digital literacy and content consistency which are still obstacles for traditional artisan cooperatives. Pradiani (2018) has also long proven that the digital marketing system is positively correlated with an increase in sales volume of home industrial products. When the aspect of digital innovation is hampered by the expectation of external capital assistance alone, the sustainability of cooperative cooperative businesses based on the craft community becomes vulnerable in the long term.

CONCLUSION

The Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative has succeeded in building an environment-based competitive advantage through the consistency of the use of natural dyes, as evidenced by the achievement of achievements at the national level. However, the implementation of green retailing strategies is still stuck in traditional retail operations. The exclusive segmentation of the market (the upper middle class and the bureaucratic sector) has not been balanced by modern partnership networks and sustainable digital marketing strategies. Limited budgets and high expectations for government capital assistance are the main stumbling blocks in adopting digital storytelling platforms.

Policy Recommendations: Local governments need to change the pattern of assistance from just facilitating physical exhibitions to integrated digital literacy mentoring programs (provision of open-source web and green content narrative training). On the other hand, the

management of the Ciwaringin Batik Cooperative must start setting aside some of the profits as an independent digital investment to break the cycle of seasonal market fluctuations.

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