EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION PROTECTION FOR BATIK LASEM: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the implementation of Geographical Indication (GI) protection for Batik Lasem, focusing on its impact, challenges, and potential improvements. While GI certification has bolstered artisans' confidence by providing legal safeguards, limited understanding of its protection scope such as motif preservation and violation reporting procedures-hinders its effectiveness. Artisans express concerns over plagiarism and inadequate support in addressing violations, highlighting the need for targeted education and clear reporting mechanisms. Using qualitative methods, including interviews with artisans and MPIG members and document analysis, the research identifies gaps in community knowledge and enforcement practices. Findings emphasize the necessity of intensive training and stronger collaboration between MPIG, government, and artisans to optimize GI's protective function. By enhancing community participation and refining implementation strategies, this study offers actionable recommendations to strengthen Batik Lasem's cultural heritage and market positioning, ensuring sustainable benefits for the local ecosystem.

KEYWORDS

Geographical
Indication (GI), Batik
Lasem, Cultural
Heritage Protection,
Community
Participation



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Introduction

Batik Lasem, a unique form of Indonesian batik originating from Lasem, Central Java, represents a rich cultural heritage that blends Javanese and Chinese influences [1, 2]. This coastal batik style is characterized by vibrant colors and distinctive motifs, reflecting the acculturation of these two cultures [3]. Its development dates back to the early 1900s, with traditional Chinese motifs like pomegranate flowers and phoenixes being prominent [2]. Over time, Batik Lasem designs evolved to incorporate more local elements and colors. The intricate creation process follows traditional batik-making techniques, requiring multiple steps from design to coloring [4].

Despite its artistic and cultural significance, Batik Lasem faces substantial challenges in the era of globalization. These include the risks of motif plagiarism, misuse of geographical names, and declining public appreciation, which threaten the authenticity and market position of this heritage product [5]. Additionally, small-scale producers often struggle with limited resources and knowledge to develop their potential and adapt to economic changes [6]. Efforts to address these issues have included strategies such as copyright protection [5], technological innovation in production processes [7], and digital marketing training [8], all aimed at preserving the cultural value of Batik Lasem while enhancing its market competitiveness.

An essential milestone in safeguarding Batik Lasem is its registration as a Geographical Indication (GI) product, which officially recognizes its unique patterns and production techniques. This initiative was led by the Association for the Protection of Geographical Indications of Batik Tulis Lasem, with application number E-IG.09.2023.000004 submitted on January 10, 2023. The registration was officially announced in the Official Gazette of Geographical Indications, Series A No. 019/E-IG/VII/A/2023, from July 26 to September 26, 2023, by the Directorate General of Intellectual Property, Ministry of Law and Human Rights of the Republic of Indonesia. This recognition is expected to enhance Batik Lasem's global market competitiveness while safeguarding its authenticity [9].

In this context, Geographical Indication (GI) emerges as a highly relevant legal instrument. GI is a form of legal protection that connects products to their specific geographic origins, ensuring that their quality, reputation, or characteristics are inherently linked to the region. For Batik Lasem, GI provides formal recognition of its unique motifs and production techniques while safeguarding its authenticity in both local and international markets. GI registration enhances product recognition, assures quality, and expands market access, which can strengthen global market positioning and boost exports [10].

The economic impact of GI is significant, as it increases consumer trust by affirming Batik Lasem as an authentic, high-quality product. This recognition not only raises the incomes of artisans but also supports the sustainability of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Lasem. However, the success of GI implementation depends on the active participation and understanding of the local community, particularly batik artisans, regarding the protection and enforcement of their GI rights. Without adequate knowledge and engagement, the benefits of GI may remain limited.

While GI offers a promising avenue for preserving Batik Lasem and enhancing its competitiveness, it does not fully address the industry's broader challenges. Complementary measures, such as copyright registration, as demonstrated by Kudus batik and embroidery artisans [11], can further bolster market value and sales. The

experiences of other regions, such as Trenggalek, which has yet to register its potential GIs, highlight the need for preventive and repressive legal protection measures [12].

This study aims to evaluate the implementation of GI for Batik Lasem one year after its registration, focusing on identifying challenges and opportunities to maximize its effectiveness. By combining legal protection with community participation and capacity-building initiatives, Batik Lasem can be empowered as a cultural and economic asset, ensuring its preservation as an enduring symbol of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage.

Despite receiving official protection through Geographical Indication (GI) certification, the implementation of this policy for Batik Lasem continues to face various challenges, particularly regarding community-level understanding. A significant issue identified is the limited awareness among artisans and local stakeholders about the scope of protection provided by the GI certification. Many artisans are not fully informed about the elements of Batik Lasem that are protected, such as motifs, production techniques, or geographic characteristics. This lack of clarity creates confusion about how the protection can be practically applied.

Furthermore, there is an information gap concerning procedures for reporting violations, such as motif plagiarism or unauthorized use of the Batik Lasem name. Artisans often feel they lack adequate access to information or training on how to document infringements, file reports, or ensure appropriate legal action is taken. As a result, the sense of security that the GI certification is supposed to provide remains insufficient, leading to doubts among artisans about the effectiveness of this protection in practice.

This issue becomes increasingly critical as Batik Lasem has been certified as a GI product for over a year. During this period, the protection intended to strengthen Batik Lasem's market position and provide a sense of security to the local community has not been fully optimized. Therefore, evaluating the implementation of GI protection is essential to identify the extent to which this policy has delivered tangible benefits to artisans and how its effectiveness can be improved.

This study aims to evaluate the first year of GI implementation for Batik Lasem by focusing on three key areas: Community Understanding: Assessing the extent to which artisans understand their rights and the benefits provided by GI certification; Violation Reporting Processes: Analyzing the challenges faced in identifying and reporting violations; Perception of Protection: Evaluating the level of security felt by artisans following the implementation of GI certification.

Through this research, practical recommendations are expected to be developed to enhance community understanding and participation in utilizing GI certification as a

tool for protection and empowerment. Additionally, this study seeks to provide insights to the government and policymakers on strategic measures needed to ensure that GI protection delivers maximum benefits for Batik Lasem and its community.

In highlighting the shortcomings of GI implementation, this research also identifies opportunities to strengthen the relationship between cultural protection policies and the empowerment of local communities. By addressing these challenges, the study aims to contribute to the sustainability of Batik Lasem as a cultural heritage and an economic asset

This study aims to comprehensively explore the implementation of Geographical Indication (GI) certification for Batik Lasem and its implications for the local artisan community. By focusing on both the benefits and challenges associated with GI protection, the research seeks to address critical gaps in knowledge and practice, contributing to the broader discourse on cultural heritage preservation and community empowerment. The specific objectives of this study are as follows: 1) To Identify the Benefits of GI Certification for Batik Lasem Artisans: This objective seeks to examine the tangible and intangible advantages of GI certification for the artisans of Batik Lasem. By analyzing the economic, cultural, and social benefits, the study aims to understand how GI certification has influenced the livelihoods of artisans and the preservation of Batik Lasem as a cultural product; 2)To Evaluate Artisan Awareness and Understanding of GI Protection and Procedures: This objective aims to assess the extent to which Batik Lasem artisans understand their rights and responsibilities under GI certification. It explores their knowledge of the elements protected by GI, the processes involved in reporting violations, and their perception of the effectiveness of this legal safeguard. This evaluation will provide insights into existing gaps in awareness and the challenges faced by artisans in leveraging GI protection; 3) To Propose Strategic Measures for Enhancing the Implementation of GI Certification Building on the findings from the first two objectives, this study seeks to develop actionable recommendations for improving the implementation of GI certification. These measures will focus on increasing community engagement, enhancing knowledge dissemination, and addressing procedural inefficiencies. The goal is to ensure that GI certification serves as an effective tool for protecting Batik Lasem and empowering its artisan community.

By addressing these objectives, this research not only contributes to the understanding of GI certification's impact on Batik Lasem but also offers practical solutions to enhance its effectiveness. The findings are expected to inform policymakers, cultural stakeholders, and artisan groups, providing a framework for optimizing GI protection for other cultural heritage products.

Geographical Indications (GIs) are recognized as a distinct category of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under the framework established by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). According to WIPO, GIs serve as identifiers for products that possess qualities, reputation, or characteristics inherently linked to their geographic origin. This form of protection is particularly significant for cultural products like Batik Lasem, as it safeguards their authenticity and prevents misappropriation by ensuring that only authorized producers within the designated area can use the GI label [13].

The benefits of GIs extend beyond legal protection; they enhance market competitiveness, promote regional branding, and provide economic benefits to local communities by increasing product value and consumer trust [14]. However, the implementation of GI policies faces challenges, including limited awareness among producers, the complexities of enforcement, and the need for a clear understanding of the scope of protection. These challenges underscore the importance of fostering awareness and capacity-building among stakeholders to maximize the benefits of GIs for cultural heritage products.

Effective GI implementation requires active community participation, aligning with Sherry Arnstein's theory of community participation. Arnstein's "Ladder of Citizen Participation" [15] emphasizes the importance of engaging local stakeholders at various levels, from consultation to full partnership, in decision-making processes. For Batik Lasem, meaningful community involvement ensures that the knowledge, traditions, and practices of local artisans are preserved and integrated into the GI framework.

In addition, Laurajane Smith's heritage management theory highlights the dynamic nature of cultural heritage, suggesting that its preservation relies on adaptive and interpretative approaches [16]. This perspective is particularly relevant for Batik Lasem, where cultural values and traditional craftsmanship are continually interpreted and recontextualized in response to contemporary demands. Incorporating community narratives and practices into heritage management fosters a sense of ownership and ensures the sustainability of GI-protected products.

The successful implementation of GIs also depends on the strength of the local business ecosystem, as outlined in James F. Moore's theory of business ecosystems. Moore [17] conceptualizes business ecosystems as dynamic networks of interconnected organizations that collaborate to create and sustain value. For Batik Lasem, this ecosystem includes artisans, local government, cultural institutions, and market actors who work together to promote, protect, and market GI-certified products.

A robust local business ecosystem not only supports the economic sustainability of GI products but also fosters innovation and adaptation to market trends. Collaboration among stakeholders can address challenges such as market access, product

standardization, and the enforcement of GI rights. Strengthening this ecosystem requires strategic initiatives, such as government-led training programs, community-driven branding strategies, and public-private partnerships to ensure the long-term viability of GI-protected cultural products.

Method

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore the implementation and impact of Geographical Indications (GI) on Batik Lasem. Qualitative methods are ideal for examining complex social and cultural phenomena, offering nuanced insights into the lived experiences of stakeholders [18]. Semi-structured in-depth interviews serve as the primary data collection method, enabling participants to share their perspectives in a flexible yet focused manner. This is complemented by document analysis to provide contextual and historical insights into GI policies and their local implementation.

To ensure a holistic understanding of the research topic, the data were gathered from diverse sources, as outlined below:

1. Primary Data Sources:

- a) Artisans: The primary producers of Batik Lasem provided firsthand accounts of the challenges and opportunities they face in navigating GI implementation. Their perspectives are crucial for understanding practical issues, such as production constraints and market dynamics.
- b) MPIG Members: Representatives from the Batik Lasem Geographical Indication Management Association (MPIG) offered insights into the administrative and regulatory aspects of GI protection, including the enforcement of certification standards and addressing violations.

2. Data Collection Techniques:

- a) In-Depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with artisans and MPIG members. This method allowed for open-ended discussions, ensuring the capture of both anticipated and emergent themes related to GI implementation. Interview guides were designed to cover topics such as awareness of GI protections, perceived benefits, and challenges in enforcement.
- b) Document Analysis: Relevant documents were analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the regulatory framework and historical context of GI protection for Batik Lasem. These included GI certification guidelines, enforcement reports, and market assessments.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's [19] systematic approach. The process included:

- 1. Data Familiarization: Reading and re-reading interview transcripts and documents to identify key themes and patterns.
- 2. Initial Coding: Creating codes from data segments relevant to the research objectives, such as "awareness of GI protections," "enforcement challenges," and "perceived benefits."
- 3. Theme Development: Organizing codes into broader themes that reflect the experiences and challenges of stakeholders. For example, a theme might focus on "gaps in stakeholder understanding" or "barriers to effective enforcement."
- 4. Theme Refinement: Reviewing and refining themes to ensure they accurately represent the data and align with the study's objectives.
- 5. Reporting: Defining and articulating themes for inclusion in the research findings.

The use of triangulation—drawing on data from multiple sources and methods—strengthened the reliability and validity of the findings.

Discussion

1. Current Status of GI Implementation

The registration of Batik Lasem motifs under Geographical Indication (GI) status marks a critical step in preserving this cultural heritage. Batik Lasem obtained its GI certification in 2020 through the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, with a focus on protecting its unique elements such as intricate hand-drawn motifs, the "tiga negeri" (three regions) dyeing technique, and its strong association with the historical and geographical characteristics of Lasem, Rembang, Central Java.

This certification includes a detailed description of the protected elements, including:

- 1. Motifs: Traditional patterns like Lok Can, Burung Hong, and Liong that reflect the syncretic blend of Javanese and Chinese cultures.
- 2. Techniques: The use of natural dyes and multi-step dyeing processes unique to Batik Lasem.
- 3. Geographical Link: Recognition of Lasem's natural resources, such as the local water quality, which contributes to the dyeing process.

For artisans, the GI status has provided a sense of pride and confidence in their work, ensuring legal protection against unauthorized replication. It has also elevated Batik

Lasem's market position, distinguishing it as a premium cultural product both domestically and internationally. Research highlights that GI certifications often lead to increased market visibility and improved economic benefits for protected products [20].

Despite these achievements, the implementation of GI policies has faced several limitations in practice, as outlined in the following sections.

2. Challenges in Community Understanding

One of the primary obstacles in implementing GI for Batik Lasem is the lack of understanding among artisans and local stakeholders. Many artisans are unaware of the specific elements protected by the GI certification and how these protections apply in practice. For example, there is uncertainty about whether design adaptations or new motifs inspired by traditional patterns fall under the GI framework.

Furthermore, there is insufficient knowledge about the procedures for reporting violations such as motif plagiarism or unauthorized use of the Batik Lasem name. A study by Giovannucci et al. [21] emphasizes that the success of GI certifications depends heavily on the capacity of local stakeholders to actively participate in monitoring and enforcement processes.

Artisans often report feeling overwhelmed by the legal and administrative complexities associated with GI. Limited outreach and training programs exacerbate this challenge, leaving many artisans ill-prepared to document and report infringements effectively. This gap undermines the potential of GI certification as a tool for empowerment and cultural preservation.

3. Opportunities for Improvement

One year after Batik Lasem received its GI certification, there are several opportunities to address these challenges and enhance the benefits of the certification.

1. Strengthening Community Education and Awareness:

Comprehensive training programs tailored for artisans and stakeholders are essential. Workshops and informational materials should focus on the practical aspects of GI protection, including how to identify and report violations. For example, simplified guides on documenting evidence and navigating legal processes could empower artisans to take an active role in enforcement.

2. Enhancing Violation Reporting Mechanisms:

Developing user-friendly reporting channels is critical. This could include digital platforms or partnerships with local legal aid organizations to assist artisans in

filing complaints. As noted by Biénabe and Marie-Vivien [22], robust reporting systems are a cornerstone of effective GI implementation.

3. Fostering Collaborative Governance:

Regular forums and dialogue sessions between the Geographical Indication Management Association (MPIG), local governments, and artisans can foster stronger collaboration. Establishing a clear division of responsibilities and shared goals can enhance the effectiveness of GI policies.

4. Technical Documentation for GI Compliance:

Creating technical documentation that outlines specific production standards and compliance protocols can help artisans maintain the authenticity of Batik Lasem. These standards should detail the traditional techniques, material sourcing, and quality benchmarks that align with the GI certification.

5. Continuous Monitoring and Impact Assessment:

Periodic evaluations of GI's impact are necessary to measure progress and identify areas for improvement. Metrics such as the number of reported infringements, participation in training programs, and market performance can provide valuable insights for stakeholders.

Through these measures, the GI certification for Batik Lasem can evolve from a symbolic acknowledgment to a practical tool for preserving cultural heritage, fostering economic development, and empowering the artisan community.

4. Technical Aspects of Batik Lasem GI Documentation

The GI registration process for Batik Lasem involved comprehensive documentation submitted to the Directorate General of Intellectual Property. Key elements included:

- 1. Product Specification: Detailed descriptions of motifs, production techniques, and raw materials.
- 2. Geographical Context: Maps and environmental analyses illustrating the unique geographical features of Lasem.
- 3. Cultural Significance: Historical accounts and community testimonies emphasizing Batik Lasem's role in local heritage.
- 4. Quality Assurance: Standards for dyeing techniques, fabric quality, and production processes to ensure authenticity.

These technical aspects align with international best practices for GI documentation, as outlined by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). Proper adherence to these standards ensures the credibility and enforceability of GI protections.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

The implementation of Geographical Indication (GI) for Batik Lasem has proven to be a significant step forward in preserving its cultural heritage and providing legal protection for its unique characteristics. The GI certification has instilled a sense of pride and confidence among artisans, reinforcing their commitment to traditional techniques and enhancing the market value of Batik Lasem. However, the study reveals critical gaps in the understanding and utilization of GI protections among the artisan community. Many artisans lack adequate knowledge of the specific aspects protected under the GI framework and are unfamiliar with the procedures for reporting violations. This limited understanding undermines the full potential of GI as a tool for safeguarding and promoting Batik Lasem. Addressing these challenges requires targeted efforts to enhance community awareness, streamline reporting mechanisms, and foster collaborative governance.

Recommendations

1. Comprehensive Education Programs for Artisans

There is an urgent need to implement intensive educational programs to empower the artisan community with a thorough understanding of GI protections. These programs should be tailored to address the unique needs and challenges faced by Batik Lasem artisans. Key topics should include the scope of GI protections, the distinction between traditional motifs and adaptations, and the legal processes for documenting and reporting infringements. Interactive workshops, visual aids, and simplified guides can make these programs more accessible and impactful.

2. Wider Dissemination of Reporting Procedures

Enhancing the visibility and accessibility of reporting mechanisms is essential to ensure effective enforcement of GI protections. Efforts should focus on creating user-friendly platforms for artisans to file complaints and access support services. Collaboration with legal aid organizations and the development of digital tools, such as mobile applications, can simplify the reporting process and encourage greater participation. Publicizing successful cases of enforcement may also serve as a deterrent to potential violators and build trust in the system among artisans.

3. Strengthening Collaborative Governance

To maximize the benefits of GI, there must be stronger collaboration between the Geographical Indication Management Association (MPIG), local governments, and other stakeholders. Regular forums, training sessions, and consultation meetings can provide a platform for stakeholders to share insights, resolve challenges, and align their goals. A structured governance framework with clear roles and responsibilities can enhance coordination and ensure that the needs of artisans are effectively addressed. Additionally, engaging market players, such as retailers and exporters, can create a more robust ecosystem for Batik Lasem's promotion and protection.

By addressing these recommendations, the GI framework for Batik Lasem can evolve into a comprehensive and practical system that not only safeguards its cultural heritage but also empowers the artisan community and strengthens its market position. These efforts are critical to ensuring the sustainability of Batik Lasem as a symbol of Indonesia's rich cultural heritage and a valuable economic asset for the region.

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